

異世界に
来た僕は
装备質店で



素早さ頼り
な旅をする

著
紙風船

画
こちも

Isekai ni Kita Boku wa Kiyoubinbode Subaya-sa Taylorina Tabi o Suru

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Chapter 1: Death of the Clerk

On that day I was at my part-time job, which was my source of income. It was a midnight shift at the convenience store in front of the station. The actual work that started after 10 pm was quite simple. Aside from, of course, dealing with customers who brought over whatever products they wanted to buy, I mainly just cleaned. The floors, shelves, toilet and a lot of machines. After having done this for a while, it practically became an instinct. The easier tasks would be finished in very little time.

That day was much like any other.

All sound faded away in front of the station as it was now past midnight. The only thing you could see was the three colors of the traffic lights and the occasional speeding cars. I had finished some of my cleaning duties, and gone out to the parking lot in order to pick up the fallen trash with tongs and collect it in garbage bags. I did this as I wandered around.

What about the store?

No problem. There were no customers. Once it passed 3 AM, hardly anyone would come. At 2 AM there would still be some people who would come to read the new weekly magazines, but today was a Tuesday. There were no magazines with such passionate readers being sold today.

After collecting quite a bit of trash, I straightened my bent back and stretched as I looked up at the sky. That something-triangle-shaped constellation was shining. Today would be sunny... I looked away from the sunless sky to make sure I hadn't missed any garbage nearby.

And then something caught my eye. It was a person who was standing in the shadow of a telephone pole, the streetlights shining behind him.

Scary...!! Uh, was I just seeing things...?

I quickly looked over my shoulder as I returned to the store. The stranger was gone after the third time I looked. But this only increased my sense of horror even more.

I entered the store and made a beeline for the storage room that was behind a door near the cash register. I sit in front of the security monitor. I move the connected mouse and view the feed of the parking lot in fullscreen. It was quite nice since I had just cleaned it. There wasn't a speck of garbage.

As I continued to watch the feed during my break, a shadow of a person walking from the parking lot appeared.

I recognize him without the need to squint. It's him. Judging by the direction, he was on a straight course for this store. I switched the screen to show the feed from 4 cameras angles inside of the store; he had indeed come inside. Well, regardless of my personal feelings, a customer was a customer.

"Welcomme. Good eveningg."

I forced my shaking feet to move as I greeted him. Most people who came at this time were incredibly tired, doing their midnight jobs, and they tended to be irritable. The trick was to use a loose, stretched out greeting instead of an energetic one. But then again, there were people who hated that too. But as far as my own experiences went, those kinds of people would be triggered over anything, and so the looser greetings were overall more effective.

Such was the out-of-place thoughts that ran through my head as I stood there. The intimidating customer had come directly towards the counter after entering. In this case, there were a few patterns that could follow. He was looking for something. He wanted something that was sold at the counter. And,

"Shut up and listen, if you don't want to die. Take out all the money from the cash register."

Convenience store robbery.

My mind went blank. I've short-circuited. What? What did he say?

"Didn't you hear me? Take out the money."

No sound would come out of my throat, as if something was stuck inside. All the fear I had felt was now showing not only through my legs, but it was eating away at my back, arms, hands, and even my brain.

"Ah...um..., what, uh....?"

"Money. Take it all out from the cashier, and the storage room as well. You better hurry if want to avoid being hurt by this guy."

So saying, the man who was no customer showed me his hand. He was holding a very large knife. There would have been less of a sense of reality had he been holding a gun. I might have stopped shaking and erupted into laughter as I patted the man on the shoulder. But this knife was reflecting the ceiling lights so brightly. It looked sharp. I could tell that this was no dream, no prank.

There was nothing I could do. There was no way that I could resist him. I opened the cash register with shaking hands.

Grabbing all of the three types of bills, I quickly offered them to him.

"There should be a safe in the backroom as well. Bring that too."

But only the manager knew the number for that safe.

"Th-the...manager, alo..ne...knows...."

"Tsk...out of my way."

The robber pushed me away. The force of the push made me crash into the cigarette shelf. The brand new boxes scattered all over the floor.

The robber entered the storage room and immediately began to violently rummage through shelves and files around the safe, scattering papers all over the ground as he looked. He was probably trying to find documents with the number. I watched from the cashier among the mess of cigarettes.

I doubted he had much time. There a murderous look in his eyes as he turned around and then started to walk towards me. No, no, no!

"You little shit...I've had enough. You are no use to me now. Die."

At that moment, I had no idea what was happening. The first thing I noticed was a heat. My stomach was hot as if it were burning. My vision showed a world of colors that was neither black nor white, before turning into the face of the robber who stood in front of me. There was an intense rage in his eyes as he gave a vulgar laugh. I shook, and slowly lowered my gaze.

The source of the heat I had felt was a knife sticking out of me.

"Ah....ggg, a.a....no...this can't..."

"It is. You'll die for seeing my face."

My uniform turned red with blood. I looked up again. The smile disappeared from the man's face as he raised his foot and began to kick me.

"Gaah!!"

I reflexively cried out. This bastard...he was kicking the handle of the knife...

There was nothing I could do but crumple on the floor. My arm had caught onto the shelf, scattering even more cigarettes.

"Tsk... You're in the way."

The man stepped on me as if I was part of the floor and fled to the front of the counter. I had no strength to go after him. I lay, covered in cigarettes as I slowly moved my arm and touched the handle of the knife. Slowly, my hand lowers to my stomach, but I could not feel the hilt. Apparently, it had entered my stomach along with the blade.

Well then...there was no hope for me...

A feeling much like resignation took over my body. There was no going back from this state. I could not feel like doing anything anymore.

My eyelids slowly closed as I surrendered. My vision turned black.

Ahh...so, so this would be my end... I had paid good money to attend a professional school, but no matter how hard I tried, I could not get hired. And I had to work this part-time job to survive. I would sleep in the afternoon and live out these days trying to pay for my scholarship. It was pathetic... I had thought, I had thought that I would do so many other things... So many things, the list was endless.

I thought, my life would be so much better...

My consciousness slowly grew hazier. The sensations in my limbs, the heat that had burned so much was now gone.

And at that moment before death, I heard one final voice.

"Confirmation of a subject who wishes to be summoned. Unique Skill 'Jack of

all Trades and Master of None' granted."

What was that...? Did someone just say something incredibly rude to me...?

Ahh...no, I was done...my consciousness...

Someone...

Chapter 2: Part-timer on a Hill

I feel a chill reminiscent of the nearby train station sting my skin. What was this? My skin felt damp. Damp, but also prickly. What was it?

Half awake, I open my eyes. I see grass. Grass? Uncomprehending, I slowly pull myself up and take in my surroundings.

I see that I'm on a mist covered, grassy hill.

"Wha...t, where...am I...?"

Yes, I should have been at the convenience store until a moment ago. Along with that robber. I remembered that much, before I started to panic and lift up my uniform to check my stomach. But the knife that should have been there was gone, there weren't even any traces of the wound on my clothes. This didn't make any sense.

It didn't, but... there was one explanation I could think of. It was that voice. It had said something about a subject for summoning.

In other words, something or someone, I didn't know which, had summoned me for a reason. I had seen this happen in a novel I read when I was a student.

Transfer to another world.

Perhaps that was what this was? Some great will or something had taken pity on my poor self as I was stabbed by the robber, and allowed me to transfer to this world...?

Well, this would be quite embarrassing if it turned out to be nothing more than a countryside in Japan. Though, that in itself was quite horrifying...

For now, I had to take some sort of action. It appeared to be early morning now... Or at least, it felt like it. I couldn't stay here forever. Fortunately, the mist was starting to dissipate.

"A morning mist, huh..."

What sort of trick of fate was this, I had been thrown into a location that was the same as my own name, 'Asagi Kamiyashiro.' (*Asagi = morning mist) I didn't

know if it was fate or intrigue, but I started to walk down the hill anyway.

Passed the plains of short grown grass, I could see a forest.

"A forest, huh..."

A forest. In terms of food, a forest would be much more likely than the plains... Thinking back, I hadn't even had my night shift break, so I had yet to eat. It would be great if there were berries or fruits to be found here.

But, if this really was another world, then surely *they* would be here.

Monsters.

If they decided to attack me, then I would need to fight back. In that case, I would need a weapon. I'm sure I could manage if I just picked up a random stick in the forest. Fortunately, I even had a box cutter in my pocket that I used to cut the strings off the new magazines that came in. My cell phone had been left in the office, though. Shit. Well, with this, I could at least sharpen the end of a stick and make a spear.

Okay, with that decision made, I should act quickly. Enemies would hardly wait for me.

I quickened my stride towards the forest.

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I walk over the soft, fallen leaves. Along the way, I had picked up a stone with a pointed end and so I started to search for a random, thin tree.

After a bit of walking, I found a tree growing that was just the right size. It was just the right thickness to fit in your hand when gripped. I hit at its roots with a rock. Klunk, klunk. The sound bounced off the tree and echoed through the forest. I was becoming a little nervous...

After several more hits, the tree slowly fell over. I take out my boxcutter and remove all the unnecessary branches. The trick was to cut the same place as if drawing a straight line. Once you've created enough notches, you should chip away as if stripping the rest away. Then you use the blunt side of the boxcutter to try and sand down the severed end of the stick. It won't be very smooth, but it should at least be easier to hold. After that, you just carefully sharpen the end

of the stick so that it does not snap. And just like that, you have a spear.

“Great... it’s finished.”

I look at the spear in my hand and think. That unique skill that had been bestowed upon me, by that voice before I died, *‘Jack of all trades, but master of none.’* Could I have become adept at working with wood because of that? Well, there was no point in thinking about it now... I try holding the spear in an offensive stance.

“What...!?”

Right then, the motions of me thrusting the spear forward appeared inside of my head. It was like I was viewing the security camera feed in the back room monitor, with the screen split in four, showing each move. One of the images was of me thrusting the spear out. In imitation, I set my feet in place and thrust out the spear.

“Oomph...!”

There was a sound of something cutting through the wind as I executed the sharp thrust. This was it, I thought. I have never even held a spear before. I repeat the powerful thrust. It was a straight and steady attack.

I was now sure that this was the ability of my unique skill.

‘Jack of all trades, yet master of none’ was a skill that allowed you to use anything skillfully even if it was your first time.

Then why couldn’t it just be ‘Jack of all trades’? The ‘master of none’ part bothered me... What if it meant that I could use them, but I would never improve past that point?

That was quite tragic. I have skills. There would probably be stats. What if, I just hadn’t realized it yet, but I could also use magic? I think of this, but no such images appeared in my head. In that case, I’d like to go somewhere where I could learn about these things.

...Yes, a town. I should head for a town. If this was really another world, there should be guilds or facilities for adventures and the like. Or such were my current delusions.

Just then, I heard a rustling sound at my back. Was it a monster? I slowly turn around.

“Googururu...”

“Woah...”

There was a small humanoid monster standing there. Its skin was a light green. Its mouth was so wide that its corners reach its pointed ears, and I could see its uneven teeth. Its limbs were quite short but the claws were sharp. Its lower half was only barely covered with a waistcloth.

I knew what it was... A goblin.

“Googaaah!!”

The goblin cried out as it swung its well-worn billhook over its head.

“Wo-wowoh...!”

I hold up my spear. The goblin comes rushing towards me, its billhook swinging down.

I frantically move out of the way, but I feel a sudden pain in my leg.

“You-you have got be kidding me...!”

My pants had been cut near the hemline. And there were drops of red blood dripping from my leg under it. Even though I knew it was only a light scrape, it hurt.

“Fuck!!”

I tore my gaze away from my leg and looked up at the sneering face of the goblin. Its ferocious expression showed that it saw me as nothing more than food. Damn it, I was not about to be killed again, in a place like this!

“Gagagagagaga!!”

“Eat this!!”

I thrust out the spear as the goblin came rushing towards me again. It was exactly as the image that had appeared in my brain. The end of the spear shot straight through the stomach of the running goblin. I must say, it was a little awkward that I aimed for his stomach instinctively, in spite of having

experienced a similar assault.

Stab quickly and pull out quickly. The end of the spear was wet with blue blood.

“Ha....gga....”

Its writhing hand dropped the billhook. I use my spear to knock it away from the goblins reach.

It slid across the fallen leaves and stopped at the base of a tree.

I watch the blood rush from the goblins wound as I hold the spear ready once again. Slowly, the goblin crumpled to its knees. Here's my chance, I think. It had fallen face first into the dirt, and I point the tip of the spear into the back of its neck.

“And now...it's over...!”

I plunge the spear deep into its neck. The goblin convulses violently as my foot presses down on its back and I pull out the spear. For a second, a fountain of blood erupts from the hole but quickly subsides. The foot that I had placed on it was drenched in blue blood.

“Hhahaahh, hhahaah...”

Ha... It was the first time I had killed... I didn't know how I felt. I took the Japanese route of trying to convince myself it was 'self-defense,' but something still bothered me. Throughout my life, I had never even killed an animal. It was quite something to have to suddenly take the life of a monster.

However, I was also someone who had been killed once. I was not so good-natured as to allow someone to do it to me again. Survival was the only option for me now. I shook my head to dispel any such negative thoughts.

Suddenly, I remember that the goblin had been carrying a billhook. Where was it...there it is. It had fallen near the roots of a tree.

“Here we are... Woah, it's disgusting. ...Huh?”

As soon as I had picked it up, images appeared in my brain once again. It was the same screen split into four with each showing footage of different moves. Well, there was no variation for attacks with this, so it was really just different

camera angles being shown. Of course, it was. You couldn't thrust with it like a sword. Now if this was a sword hatchet...nevermind. I picked up the old billhook that had my own blood on it and the spear I had carved with a box cutter and continued through the forest.

I was far from unstoppable...

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Currently, I was hiding behind some bushes after having walked for quite a while. Why was I hiding? The reason was standing just on the other side of the bushes. I separated the leaves enough to confirm the situation, and sighed.

“Gaaagaaga, kugooooo!”

“Gegagagagaga!”

“Gaagaagaa!”

More goblins had appeared. And as a herd this time. As far as I could tell, there were at least 10 of them...

This was the worst. It hardly mattered now, that I could wield a spear or a billhook, those numbers were not manageable. There was nothing I could do. I would have to wait for them to leave.

But things would not be so easy. As if things couldn't get any worse, one of the goblins had started to approach the bush I was hiding behind. Its nose sniffed at the air as it came closer and closer. What? Was it my smell...? The goblin blood...! The blood that had soaked into my clothes was now luring them!

“Shit...!”

I cursed internally as I frantically made my retreat. What should I do...The goblin was practically right in front of me now. And I was practically out of options.

Chapter 3: Bivouac in Another World

It was likely that only seconds had passed. But I was able to come to a decision. I was determined to stay put.

As soon as the goblin who was lured by the scent came near the bushes, I thrust the spear out and right into its skinny little throat. I didn't know if it was by chance or my own skill. But it had gone so cleanly and precisely through the center, that the goblin couldn't even scream before it fell dead. I quickly grabbed the body and pulled it behind the bushes.

Now there were nine in the herd.

Good...perhaps I could chip away at their numbers like this... As if that would ever work.

I knew that much. After all, once the goblin blood started to flow like this...

"Googaahh! Gugaga!"

They would discover it. But I had anticipated as much. I pull out the spear and grab the goblin's leg in order to drag the body with me as I run in the opposite direction of the herd.

All my energy is exerted in creating a gap between us, and once they are completely out of sight, I stop and cut off the goblin's head with the billhook. First, I spread the overflowing blood on as much of the ground as possible, causing the smell to spread through the area. Then I run.

Out of nowhere, a memory of this one time I had to chase a shoplifter during my part-time days comes to mind.

Of course, there was no time to think about such things. After running a short distance I stop again, and start to dig into the dirt with the billhook. It's a good thing that the dirt and rotten leaves were soft and easy to cut through... I smear the dirt over my blood covered legs to extinguish the smell. As that was hardly going to be enough, I lie in the dirt and begin to roll from left to right as well. Changing my body odor to that of the soil. With this, I should be able to fool their noses. My bloodied spear will also have to go. You've been very helpful,

buddy. Thank you.

I change the direction I've been running in and now head for the plains. Surely, I would be safer if I went in the opposite direction of the forest. I prayed that I wouldn't encounter any new monsters on my way there as begin to run again.

After running for quite a while, I slowed to a walk. My discarded spear was now replaced with a stick. With my trusty billhook, it was quite easy to cut things. But I couldn't work on sharpening it while I walked, so it would remain just a stick for now.

A little further on, the forest suddenly ended and I walked out onto the plains that spread out past the hill. Trying to stay cautious of anything behind me, I make for the hill. I was quite surprised to make it back here... Though, I looked completely different now than when I had left. Back then, I was clean and unarmed, now I had a stick and a billhook and was covered in dirt. From what I could tell, looking at the position of the sun, it was about noon. Only 5 to 6 hours had passed...

Perhaps I had decent adaptability then.

I sat in what was probably the same spot I had first appeared, and took a short break.

I had not been able to get any food or drink after all.

The only thing I did was murder someone and pick up a dirty billhook.

"That was exhausting..."

But I couldn't just stay here and whine. I rested just long enough to catch my breath before looking at my surroundings again. There was no mist at all now, the view was great. Though, that also meant there was nowhere to hide. But that was only true in this spot, if I went down the hill, I would not be visible from the forest. And I wasn't afraid of anything anymore.

Turning my back to the forest, I descend the hill. Apparently, the plains continued quite far off. This too, made it difficult to hide... Enemies would be easier to spot, but they would also see me, and there was nothing I could do about it. Well, well, isn't this great...

As I was thinking this, I came upon something new. Two parallel lines and some sort of footsteps in between.

Was this the wheels of a horse-drawn carriage? The dirt colored lines stretched out from the forest and split into two. Like it was tracing the forest, or avoiding it. This was a stroke of luck! I was quite sure that following it would lead me to a town. With how worn these were in both directions, either one was likely to lead to a town.

But I couldn't tell which was closer or what the distance would be. In a way, this was a crucial moment for me. Hmm...I had to think...

I thought for about 5 minutes, but I think I'm just going to take the left path! And so I walked on. It was much easier to walk on than the grass as the ground was well-trodden here. I would be able to move at a much faster pace than when I was on the plains. I could feel that I was going faster. Or maybe it was just my anxiety getting the best of me.

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I've been walking nonstop since then. The sun had started to set behind my back. In other words, I was walking towards the east. As long as the sun was setting in the west like it's supposed to, anyway. Based on that premise... with the hill in the center, the forest must be stretching out to the north. I create a map in my brain as I walk.

It's now evening. I think I'll rest soon. But I only have the billhook and stick with me. It was likely that other monsters would become active once the sun had set. Well, I would have to do something then...

Actually, I really only had one option. I could still see the forest from the corner of my vision. I could climb one of those trees. As far as I could tell, that was the only place that would be safe. All things considered, I didn't really want to go back in there, but it wasn't as if I could just roll around in the plains and wait for morning either. I wouldn't even survive until morning if I did that.

I was quick to move once I'd decided. The trick was to be fast with everything. I run back to the forest. After looking around to make sure there were no goblins, I start to cut at the vines that wrapped around the trees. Once there was enough, I picked up a random rock and folded it into my clothes before

wrapping the vines around my body. The vines were also used to wrap the stick and billhook to my body. Now I just needed to find a partner to spend the night with.

The ideal tree would be along the border of the plains and the forest, with good height and strong branches.

I searched a bit before finally finding one. Damn, it was already getting dark. I frantically climb up the tree.

It was something that I was very good at since childhood. And so there was no slipping off before I reached the branch of my choice.

Then I take off the vines and rock that were used to carefully wrap my body with. I struck at the tree with the billhook to hold it and sandwiched the stick between the tree and my back. The rock was held between my thighs as I twist and braided the vines. I was turning them into a nature-made rope. Even if you didn't feel like one would be reliable enough, combining three would result in something incredibly tough. I fasten the rock to one end of the rope and I'm all set to go. I throw the rock to the side with as much force as I can muster. The rope wraps around the tree before swinging back to me.

Good! Success! Now I just needed to tie it and I would be fixed to the tree without any fear of falling!

After moving from side to side to make sure that the rope won't come loose, I can finally sigh in relief. My surroundings were now completely covered in darkness. I couldn't see anything.

And then I remember something. Everything that happened today. Encountering the robber, being murdered, waking up in another world. One moment I think that I'm victorious against a goblin, only to run into a whole herd. So I painted myself with dirt and ran. And after so much walking I ended up in this tree.

Damn, this was no joke. Weren't these transporting to another world stories supposed to be about cheating and more cheating and building harems for no reason at all? And here I am in this miserable state. Poor me.

"Hahh..."

But, things were only getting started. Surely things would turn around once I reached a town. This was another world, it would be a waste to not enjoy it.

With that hope in my chest, I gazed up at the eastern sky and spent my first night in another world on the top of this tree.

Chapter 4: Outdoors Dining is 20% Tastier

With a start, my eyes opened. It was still dark all around me. But there was a moon in the sky that had not been there before. Three in fact. A blue moon, a red moon, and a yellow moon. Each was different in size as they illuminated the forest below. I looked down at the forest bathed in moonlight. It wasn't because I was cautious or had a bad feeling about anything. It's this way I was sleeping, it was incredibly terrible. The tightrope made of vines was digging into my stomach...

But there was nothing I could do about it... It was not as if I could just move along from here. And so I take the billhook, that I had stabbed in the tree and started to cut off any branches that were in reach. These were quickly wrapped around my body to make an instant ghillie suit. It was at least better than being seen by anyone as I was before. Well, I suppose this was as good as it was going to get... I lean my back against the tree once again. There was really nothing else to do. I let out a sigh.

Staying awake just because I couldn't sleep would have a negative impact on the following day. A yawn escapes me as I think this. It was probably because I was so tired, but the sleepiness had finally come. Without resisting, I surrendered myself completely and was off to dreamland before I knew it. I'm quite sure it was a dream where I had a chat with some regular customer during my night shift.



“M....aaa...it’s morning...”

Light poured from between the trees and hit me in the face. The sky I could see through the cracks of the forest roof was blue and clear. Today would be sunny. It was preferable to rain, but walking in the coverless plains on a hot day was not going to be pleasant either. I would have liked a cloudy day. But what good would my whining do? I untied the rope and wound it around my waist. If I didn't reach a town today, then I would be sleeping outdoors and in a tree again. I couldn't throw it away.

I removed the branches used for camouflage and took in my surroundings. There did not seem to be any goblins about. This made me rather delighted as I prepared to climb down the tree. The billhook too, was tied around my waist with the rope and the spear was tossed from the tree as it would get in the way while I was climbing down. Slowly, my feet extend towards the ground, and all the while I can hear my backbone cracking. Hmm... It wasn't the best sound, healthwise, but it was refreshing to hear.

Now that I was refreshed, I picked up my spear and head back for the wheel tracks.

Once I arrived, the walk continued much as it had yesterday. Only today, I was determined to make it all the way. But there was nothing in my stomach. I was hungry...if only I could arrive at the town before I fainted...

I wouldn't be able to move if I stopped walking. I continued onward as if running from my own fatigue. And then I suddenly heard the clean sounds of something running. It was...water!

I went off the road and shoved my way through the bushes. What lay past them was a small river that was about 30 cm in width. I crawled to the river and washed my filthy hands until they were clean. After that, I scooped it up in my hands and drank it all in one gulp.

"...AHHH! Delicious!"

The sensation of cold water running down your throat. It was good. I drank the water until I was satisfied and lifted my face. This small river was flowing towards the east, but it seemed to be coming not from the west, but the southwest. I see, so this was the junction point with the wheel tracks. Lucky for me. I would be able to travel alongside the river for quite some time. Now, if only I had some food, then there would be no reason to complain.

I listened to the sounds of rushing water for several hours as I walked. Around this time, the sun had reached its peak and was on its route towards the horizon, I felt a strange presence. What? I prick up my ears. The sound of rushing water. The sound of the wind caressing the plains. The sound of faraway trees bending as they sway. And...a certain rustling and the sound of movement through the grass.

Something was here.

I slowly hold the spear in one hand and reach for the billhook with the other. The sound was coming from the south. It was from the other side of the river. In that case, I would put some distance between me and the river and hide the grass near the plains.

After a moment of waiting in the shadows, a dog... No, it was a wolf. It had a light brown and ash colored fur that moved in the wind as it lapped at the river water. Was this...an animal? Or a monster? I couldn't tell. But the one thing I was sure of, was that this guy could be food. Meat had appeared right in front of me. I never thought the day would come where I would look at a wolf and think that meat had arrived. But these were desperate times. I was hungry. And so I would hunt.

I take my time observing it. Luckily, the wind was headed leeward. My stench of dirt would not reach its nose. But I should still be cautious, after all, this was a doggie. They had the keenest sense of smell. I wasn't sure that something wouldn't give away my position.

Spear in hand, I slowly, slowly, make my way through the tall grass. It was still preoccupied with rehydrating itself. I had a clean shot of its exposed head. I prayed that this wouldn't just be luck, like with the goblin, as I thrust the spear out, aiming right between its eyes. In the same instant, the wolf raised its head and looked at me. The spear landed not between its eyes, but right in its throat. For a second I felt as if our eyes met.

A creature who lives in the wild, a person who was thrown into it.

It was a brief encounter. But I felt as if something had shot through me at that moment.

With its throat pierced, unable to let out a single cry, the wolf fell over; I slit its throat. And just like that, I plunged its body into the river and let the blood run out. The stream became a dark red. I would have to drink the water here for a while now... But I had meat. My spirits rose significantly at this first meal I had since my arrival. But I needed fire to eat it... I didn't even have a lighter with me. I may have died under a pile of cigarettes, but I never smoked them. I suppose I would have to...

Prepare some wood and a stick.

I was somehow able to start a fire. I nearly lost the skin on my palms in the process, but, perhaps this was due to my new skill, because I was able to make a fire in spite of never doing it before. After draining the blood, I removed the skin from the cold meat with the billhook. It was not easy by any means, but my motto was that ‘potatoes were the only thing improved with skin.’

After about twenty minutes, I was able to remove the skin from the meat completely. Now I just needed to separate the parts, but I had absolutely no knowledge of how to go about that. The only thing I could do was to randomly chop off the limbs from the body...

A chopped off hind leg is now standing by the bonfire. The bonfire was made by the river to keep it from spreading, just in case. The wood cracked inside of the fire as fat oozed from the meat in large drops. I swallowed my saliva. Ahh, it smelled incredible now. Yes, it smelled like a wild beast, but it wasn’t raw at least. The knowledge I had from when I was a child who dreamed of hunting came in handy. My only regret was not learning how to butcher animals, but it wasn’t even that hard. The leftover parts were tied to a rope and sunk into the stream to keep it fresh.

Now, I think it was looking good. I could not wait any longer. I grabbed the shin of the leg and looked at it. It was in the shape of an oversized piece fried chicken. It was cooked perfectly. The trick with meat was to allow it to cook all the way through.

“Well then, let’s dig in!”

The first piece of meat I tore into in over one day was absolutely amazing.

Chapter 5: Forest Run

In a craze, I bite, tear, chew and swallow. There is no salt or pepper here, just the real taste of flesh. It reminds me of that time when I splurged my money on payday by buying meat and cooking it in the morning, only to realize I forgot the salt and pepper. At that time I was disappointed at it being ‘tasteless!’ but now it seemed delicious. Maybe hunger acted as a spice, or it was just that wolf meat tasted great. Whatever the reason, it was incredible. Before I knew it, the hind leg was nothing but bone.

Ahhh...I am satisfied... Looking into the flickering flames started to make me sleepy, but I could now allow myself to sleep now. There was still so much to do. With my hunger satiated, I was now refreshed enough to think. What did I need to do first? Put out the fire. I extinguish it by throwing sand over the cinders. The next thing to do was to retrieve the meat I had sunken in the river and wrap it in a wet t-shirt in order to carry it on my back. Then I needed to get out of here as soon as possible.

There was a simple reason for why I was in a hurry. I did not want to repeat my mistakes. The last time it was the smell of the blood from a goblin I had killed. That was the cause of much misfortune. It was the reason I reeked of dirt now.

Now it was a wolf that I had killed. It had likely been separated from its pack. It was not likely that a wolf would be moving on its own like that. Unless it was a lone wolf, but that seemed a little too convenient to be true. There were no adjustments for being the protagonist. There must be a pack nearby. Even if there wasn't, there would be no harm in assuming there was one and acting accordingly. It had smelled so good. I don't know if the smell would have excited the wolves' appetites, but it would surely make them suspicious.

And so I would leave as soon as possible. There would be no resting after the meal. I couldn't see a future other than death in the event of being attacked by a whole pack.

After finishing preparations, I squat down low, with perked up ears and

observe my surroundings. I didn't hear any rustling. Now was my chance!

Leaving the river behind me, I return to the wheel tracks. I am sure to head towards the east as I jog ahead for a while. Ughh, this was going to mess up my digestion...

□ □ □ □

Some time passes after that. Fortunately, no monsters attacked me as I ate the wolf meat and walked towards the east where there would surely be a town. Partway, the river had curved off into a different direction. It was a little lonely to have that soft sound of running water disappear. It was almost like a companion to me on this journey. But I was alone. There was nothing to do but walk on.

I walked for two days, but the forest never ended. It was clearly very vast. I was constantly paranoid that someone was watching me between the trees, but in the end, I had no choice but to sleep on the top of one of them. But really, I was starting to get used to this life. I slept well at night. The morning air tasted great.

It was now the fifth day, and the familiar scenery finally began to change around me. The forest, which until now had only existed on my left started to invade the front as well. The wheel tracks which had seemed to be avoiding the forest, were now headed straight into it.

"Hmm, what could it mean..."

I was sure that it had been avoiding the forest because of the goblins. There could be other monsters aside from goblins as well. So then why was it going straight into the forest now? Well, it could only mean that the town was right ahead. That's why the tracks don't bend to the south. If this town was in the east, then I had no choice but to head right into the trees as well. But the goblins were still fresh in my mind. If they attacked me again here...damn, that would be the worst.

But I couldn't stay here. I had to go. You needed to decide quickly and immediately in order to survive. I take down my spear and billhook. I'm much lighter now that I've eaten all the wolf meat. Though, you could also say that it meant there was no turning back. I tightened my belt and walked towards the

forest.

I noticed one thing after getting close. The wheel tracks were not just recklessly plunging into the trees. The trees had been cut down around the tracks. As far as I could see, there did not seem to be any trees blocking the way. Apparently, people were maintaining a clear path here. The town must be quite close now.

I stay cautious of my surroundings as I stand at the edge of the forest. With a lick of my lips, I take the first step. I should reach the town as soon as I get through this forest. Probably.

...Of course, that was not going to be the case. There were no advantages to being the protagonist. I could already feel that there were eyes on me. Multiple pairs from both the left and the right. My legs can't stop moving. I felt like I would be attacked the moment I stopped walking.

Shit, what was it...who was it... I haven't felt this scared for a while... My breathing was getting harder, my heartbeat was uncontrollable. The overall rhythm of my body increases and my legs can only follow. I begin to walk faster, then to run. The sense of being looked at doesn't disappear. Where was the forest's exit...!?

Finally, it appeared in my vision. Between a crack in the forest. It was a wolf. Several wolves. Why. I had erased my tracks. But these wolves were strange. Their fur was a light green. So they were different than the one I had eaten...?

I shake my head and stop worrying about it. I didn't know what it meant, but it was more important to run now. I raise my head and run even faster than before. I was panicking quite a bit now. I was trying to run while saving my energy, but I could not adjust my speed either. I was running too fast. But somehow, I didn't feel tired. This must be what they call the power of adrenaline. I might as well get as much distance as I can. Not from the wolves, but to the exit.

I was breathing loudly when the howl of the wolves entered my ears. They must have gotten impatient. I look behind as I run and sure enough, there were about five of them running behind me.

"Ahhh!!"

This, this was horrifying..!! This was quite different compared to when my grandma's dog used to chase me as a kid. These wolves had every intention of killing me!

I look forward and run at full speed. I can finally see the trees part in front of me, revealing an exit. Yes! Victory would be mine if I could only get through! If there really was a town, at least.

I push myself to run even faster. Ughh, this spear was in the way! I throw it behind me with a half-hearted hope that it might hit one of the wolves chasing me.

“Yelp!”

What, seriously? I look over my shoulder and saw that one wolf was lying on the ground. What luck! Nope. There should have been fewer wolves now that I had killed one, but there were in fact even more now...! There were at least fifteen of them running towards me and howling. Shit, I might just wet my pants. But I won't. The exit was right there. Ten meters...five... I was out!

Right then, a blinding light assaulted me as if I had just exited a tunnel. But my feet won't stop. I run through this world of whiteness until my vision returns. It was only a few seconds. And the scene that lay before me was what I had hoped for so much.

The gates of a town.

Chapter 6: The Town in the Forest

"HEEEELP MEEE!!"

It was a shameless, all-out cry for help. I screamed at the top of my lungs and hoped there would be people near the entrance of the town. The wolves were at my back and would pounce in any moment as I ran to the gates.

My prayers were answered. An old man wielding a spear jumped out from behind the gates. The first person I met in this world. Town resident number one!

"What is it!? What's happened!?"

"Wolves!! WOLVESss!!"

I was in such a panic that I couldn't form sentences. But that word was all that was needed for the old man to realize. He quickly blew into the whistle that was around his neck. Right then, six more men appeared from the other side of the gate. Were they sextuplets? No.

"It's a pack of forest wolves! A traveler is being attacked!"

"Hey, you! Over here! Come inside!"

You don't have to ask twice! I trembled and nodded, then ran as fast as I could. It felt like the sounds of the wolves were becoming distant. I kept my momentum and rushed passed the group of old men and tumbled through the gates.

Wa-, water...! My throat was so dry as I forced myself to breathe and then turned around. The old men with spears were facing the wolves...the forest wolves in two lines of three and four. The forest wolves showed no signs of fear, and they charged towards the men. I gasped in surprise. The spears crashed into the fangs, and the fight began. But even though these men had spears, they were several against many. Now that I had caught my breath, I picked up my chipped billhook and went to join the fray. But, right then, something grabbed me by the shoulder and threw me to the ground. Hey, who the hell? I'm busy right now.

"Now, you sit right here, chicken liver."

I looked up and saw a haggard looking old man with a smirk on his face. He wore leather armor and carried two unsheathed swords in his hands. Who the hell was he?

"Haha, that was a good sprint back there! You looked just like a rabbit running for its life, hah!"

Now a gangly looking man with a somewhat offensive face appeared holding a short sword. Well, this wasn't the best first impression...

"What is with you guys... This is important. Let me go."

"Annnnd as I was saying, what good would it do for a coward like you to go? What will you do with that rusty old billhook? Eh?"

"I'm going to go and help those men fight off the wolves, of course!? Do you see how many there are!"

The haggard man and the gangly man looked at one another. Then they erupted into a boisterous laugh.

"Buwahahaha!! You, you! Don't you think you are panicking a little too much over some forest wolves!!"

"What even are you!! Are you a traveling minstrel!? You do make us laugh hah!!"

I didn't understand... So those numbers were nothing serious to them? Or, was this somehow normal?

"The-then, what did you two come here for...? Why the weapons?"

"Why? We brought them for you of course."

So saying, the tip of the sword was pointed at my throat. In a second the two men became very serious.

"Don't try anything funny. If it turns out you're a dangerous one who is only pretending to cower like a rabbit, then we might have to kill you."

"That's right. Now, will you hand over that filthy billhook of yours?"

Ah, I see. Those old gatekeepers had to go to fight the forest wolves, so these

two were sent to monitor me.

"I'm sorry then. Here, take the billhook. I won't leave this spot. Just please don't point that at me."

"As long as you understand. You will shut up and sit here quietly."

The gangly man received the billhook wordlessly and inspected its chipped blade.

"Hey, you. You came through the forest with just this?"

"Ah, yeah. I stole it from a goblin."

"Huh? A goblin?"

"Well, I didn't have anything else."

The gangly man stared at me doubtfully.

"Well then. How did you, how did you steal it from the goblin?"

"I stabbed him with a spear I made from a carved tree branch. I stabbed the goblin in the stomach and killed him when he fell. Then I took his weapon."

"Are you from a native tribe or..."

The haggard man who had been listening silently looked at me with an exasperated expression. Well, what else was I supposed to do! I was completely unarmed!

"Really, what kind of black rabbit..."

"Black rabbit?"

"Your hair. It's black, isn't it? And you're a cowardly rabbit. It fits perfectly! Black Rabbit!"

Hey, they were cute little critters, but he clearly meant to insult me! Are you kidding me!

As we talked like this for a while, the pack of forest wolves was annihilated. Apparently, they really weren't anything to be worried about. The standards must be pretty high in this world. Or was it just me that was very weak?

"Ah, it's been a while since we fought a whole pack. That was very, very

tiring."

"Thank you, and I'm sorry for the trouble."

I bowed to the old gatekeeper who had returned. I had really been saved. I would have been dead if these people hadn't come. My throat would have been torn out and they would have dragged my body back into the forest...

"Bah, it's nothing. It's not every day that you're attacked by an entire pack. It must have been quite the shock for you. Ah, Gardo and the others were a good help too."

"Gardo?"

"No, we were just bored. Nevermind us."

The haggard-looking man answered. So that guy was Gardo.

"Let's go, Ness."

"Fine. See you around, Black Rabbit."

The gangly man named Ness, grinned at me as he walked away. The two of them were quite an odd pair... I'm sure I would be seeing them again. I hoped they would at least stop calling me Black Rabbit.

"You, you're covered in dirt, I see. Are you hurt?"

"Umm, this was just to disguise my scent. I'm not injured."

With that, I received several looks of 'is this guy serious?'

"Ah, well, that is fine then. There's a guardhouse over there with a well in the back. Why don't you go and wash up? You don't seem to have any belongings with you, much less any clothes. I'll have some spares prepared for you."

What a kind man... I accepted the offer and headed towards the well and wiped my body down with a borrowed towel and changed into a linen shirt. Hmm, it was very comfortable. The old clothes went a bag I had also borrowed. I was borrowing a lot... Hopefully, they didn't mind too much.

"Now, you must have calmed down a little. My name's Russell. And you are?"

The gatekeeper's name was Russell. There seemed to be a lot of foreign sounding names here. I thought as I memorized the name of my rescuer, before

introducing myself as well.

"I'm Kamishiro Asagi... Uh, I mean Asagi Kamishiro. Thank you for helping me."

I switched the way of saying my name to sound more foreign.

"Asagi, huh. Don't worry about it. Let's start again. Welcome to Fhiraldo!"

Well, leaving that aside, it had been 6 days since I started wandering this new world. And at long last, I had arrived at my first town, 'Fhiraldo.'

Chapter 7: -A Warm Welcome and a Torrid Welcome-

I asked Russell about all sorts of things.

"I saw you talking with Gardo back there, was there a problem? Those two, they have foul mouths and... Well, they're adventurers who drifted here. But they aren't bad people."

"They were a little rough, but I know now that it was on your orders, so it's fine."

They also gave me a strange nickname, but it wasn't a big deal...I think.

There were more important matters.

"It's my first time in this town, and I'm wondering if there is any place to stay."

"Ahh, in that case. Go straight down this road and turn at the second corner. There is a good inn over there. They may be a bit more accommodating if you mention my name."

"Oh, are you big in this town then?"

"No, you stupid bastard. I'm just the captain of the guards."

That's what you call big. He even proudly showed the star-shaped badge that was on his chest. I suppose it was the proof that he was the captain. Now that I think of it, so it was the captain that came out to help me first... How blessed I must be...

"So, you were a captain. That's really impressive."

"Haha, if you say so! By the way, Asagi. Where are you from? I'd hardly call it normal for someone to be wandering around the forest like you were. Did something happen to you?"

Russell's gaze fixed on me. How should I reply to him? I didn't feel like he would believe if I just blurted something about coming from another world. I felt a little guilty about it, but decided to make up a random lie at that moment.

"From pretty far away, actually. I got chased by goblins along the way and lost all of my belongings... I was running without really thinking and ended up on this hill."

"A hill around these parts...you must mean the Hill of Mist."

Hill of Mist?

"Surely you've seen that hill sticking out in the middle of the plains. There's a hill there. It's a strange place it is, it becomes shrouded by mist in the morning, even if it's not cold. I don't believe there are any other hills around there?"

"No, it's that place exactly. I was surrounded by mist before I knew it."

"Haha, I thought so. It would've taken you quite a long time to walk from there. You should rest up today."

So saying, Russell handed over a small cloth bag. I accepted it and heard the sound of jangling. Was this...I looked inside and there was indeed money.

"Russell, I can't accept this from you. You saved me, and even gave me clothes to wear already..."

"Asagi, you stupid bastard. I'm the one that suggested that inn. How would you rest without some coin?"

"But..."

"Ahh, don't you get me wrong, alright? I'm not giving it to you. It's a loan. You can make it back and repay me, alright? Whenever you can. When you have enough money, you need only hand it over."

"Russell... Thank you, for everything."

"It's fine. Don't mention it. You should also get registered as an adventurer, while you're at it. It's quite lucrative!"

According to Russell, there is a job known as adventuring wherein you kill monsters and explore ruins. Well, it was honestly something I already knew a lot about. Apparently, all you needed to do was go to the guild and get registered. G ranks were known as 'Rocks.' It had something to do with their value being little more than the rocks on the ground, or strength perhaps.

"It also means there are so many of them that they are disposable!"

According to Russell, anyway.

"But you know, even among rocks you might find precious stones known as 'gems.' With a little polish these guys will turn into impressive jewels. I pray that you prove to be such a rock."

And with that, he hit me hard on the back. The breath was pushed out of my lungs, but I felt like I received a lot of spirit in return.

"Thanks, Russell. I should go now."

"Ah, get going!"

I waved a hand at him and then headed off to the inn.

The inn that he suggested was the 'Spring Wind Inn,' a two-story, seemingly somewhat luxurious inn. Also, there was something that had been bothering me for a while, but I could actually read the letters. I could even talk with people. It entered my ears with the familiarity you'd expect from a language that you've spoken for a long time. I had wondered about this since I was talking with Russell, but there was no answer to that question. I suppose there was no point in worrying about it now. And so I didn't.

"Hellooo. Is anyone in here?"

"Helloo. Do we have a customer?"

A large framed and middle-aged woman appeared from the back. She stood behind the counter and looked towards me.

"Um, I've come by recommendation of Mr. Russell?"

"Oh, Russell is it? Then we must treat you extra special!"

The woman was all smiles the moment she heard Russell's name. Clearly, the potency of his name was no joke.

"I'm Maris. And you?"

"I am called Asagi. I'd like to stay for one week for now...is this enough money?"

So saying, I took out all of the money I had just borrowed and displayed it on

the counter. I hadn't had time to check properly, but I now saw that there were both silver and copper coins. And there were definitely more of the silver variety. That Russell...

"Oh, there will be change if you have this much. Good. Asagi, you will stay in the corner room on the second floor. Meals will be served for breakfast, lunch, and dinner. The eating room is down there. The fee for your meals shall be free!"

"Do you mean it? It's one week, that means you'll lose money for twenty-one meals!"

"Well, you're a guest that Russell recommended, so we must be sweet with you. You'll eat well with us, you will!"

The effect of his name was tremendous. How would I ever repay him...

"Then I will accept your hospitality...Miss Maris. I will stay here for a while."

"Very good!"

I was happy for such a generous innkeeper.

After leaving all my belongings in the room I was shown, I decided to head for the guild house. By the way, the room in the inn was bigger than the one I used to live in.

I went out onto the main street and looked around like a country bumpkin. Due to being a town inside of a forest, most of the buildings were made of wood. There was something very relaxing about walking through the peaceful road with its buildings facing each other.

There was an old man hollering in front of his fruit stall. A young butcher who folded his arms after arranging the meat in his store. There was even a flower shop. It was a lively little town. Along the way, I saw a weapons shop. As a boy, there was something incredibly rousing about it, but I held off for the moment. I needed to become an adventurer first. I controlled my eagerness and headed for the guild.

It was easily found. That large building. Also, there were was a constant flow of rough-looking men going in and out. They must be adventurers. Most carried

swords and spears.

I passed through the open gates, and inside there were several counters with signs that read: “Registration”, “Quest”, “Reward” and “Questions/other.” In the front, there were stairs that led to the second floor and stairs that led to the basement. On the left, there was a bar. In spite of it being midday, there were men and women drinking and making noise.

“Oi, look over there. A shamelessly dressed boy’s come to visit!”

“Haha, I think they’re rather nice!”

What boring prudes. Of course, they wouldn’t leave me alone... This would turn sour regardless if I ignored them or shot back. It was a very predictable scenario.

“Ahh, I’ve just arrived in this town. I wanted to become an adventurer!”

I put on my part-timer’s face.

“Eh? Oh, so you must be the Black Rabbit!”

What the?

“Hey, look! The infamous Black Rabbit has graced us with his presence!”

“The black haired cowardly rabbit! Let me see him!”

“Buwahahaha! Just look at him! How stylish!”

A shower of ridicule. Pointing fingers. Drunks really were a merry bunch.

But it also seemed that I wasn’t quite welcome here.

Chapter 8: Cold Heart

They laughed up a storm. What was with these people? It was awkward. I ignored them and headed for the ‘Registration’ counter. But then one of the drunkards got up and blocked my path.

“What is it?”

I attempted to handle it with my ‘customer service smile’, but had my collar pulled in return.

“Rather impudent to ignore us just now. Just who are you, Black Rabbit?”

“Isn’t it obvious? I’m just an applicant here?”

My customer service face does not crumble. I was becoming increasingly annoyed at this exchange, but it seemed too foolish to become angry at these kinds of people.

The adventurer continued to glare at me. I looked back with a pleasant expression. Then two thick arms cleaved their way between us.

“Now-now-now, what’re you doing? You can’t start a fight inside the guild house.”

“Mr. Gardo...this runt was acting insolent, in spite of being new here and...”

“I don’t care if he was insulting you or blowing you. This is the guild. Just keep it civil.”

Gardo’s thick, hard arms grabbed the arm that had me by the collar. The man’s expression contorted with pain. His face looked quite ugly as he finally released me. And with a silent glare, he returned back to his seat at the bar.

“Sorry ‘bout that. The man seemed to be quite drunk.”

“It’s because you two started talking about this Black Rabbit. Give me a break...”

“You can blame Ness for that one. He does get carried away sometimes... Anything amusing happens, and he’ll let everyone know as soon as he can.”

"Well, it's not too amusing to me."

I sighed as I saw Gardo awkwardly scratching his head. Were adventurers perhaps starved of good entertainment here? I'd appreciate people not making such rumors about me as a joke...

"Well, um...right. I'll give Ness a good scolding about this. I hope you forgive him."

"If you can make sure the other adventurers know too...I think they're about to terrorize me."

"I'll ensure that don't happen."

So saying, Gardo went back to the bar counter. From the way he talked, it seemed that he must be quite high in rank. Wasn't he a wandering adventurer... he was probably able to keep the peace due to his physical abilities. But I wonder how management here was. I felt like I shouldn't get my hopes up too high.

After seeing his huge back move away, I turned and finally reached the 'Registration' counter.

There was a quiet-looking girl sitting on the other side. She looked like the type of person who always had their nose in a book.

"Excuse me, I would like to get registered as an adventurer."

"Ye-yes! Please fill out this Adventurer's Registration form."

And she handed over the sheet of paper. What's this? Was she scared after seeing what had just happened...?

I grabbed a pen and filled out my name, age, weapon of choice, magic abilities and whether I preferred the advance guard or the rearguard. So this world had magic after all. It made me a little excited. But what about weapons? My unique 'Jack of all Trades' skill seemed like it would allow me to use anything, but... Hmm... I should probably just put down what I had experience with. Spear and billhook...a shortsword. And for the record, I am 22.

"Alright, I've filled it out."

"Th-thank you... Hmm, Asagi huh. Um, you've chosen the advance guard, but

have you any real experience in combat?"

"Just goblins and wolves from the plains. Both were more of an ambush, actually."

"Understood. Combat experience...goblins and wolves... Why is the magic column empty?"

"Yes, I can't use magic. Or, I'm not quite sure whether or not I can."

"I see. Very well, we shall use this status card to confirm. If there is indeed any spells you can use, you can fill them out here afterward."

So they do have status cards! Great!

"Alright."

"This status card hasn't been registered to an individual yet, so you need only say, 'status open' and your status should be displayed. In a moment we will need to drop a sample of your blood on this card to finalize the registration. And then everything will be complete. The status display won't change regardless if you're registered or not. However, it will not display anything once you leave the village, so please refrain from running off with it like a filthy thief. In fact, registration can only occur within this room."

So in other words, there should be no problems as long as I register here.

"Right...well, status open."

I chant and a hologram-like display was projected from the card. My first look at my status. Well, what would it be...

◇ ◇ ◇ ◇

Name: Asagi Kamiyashiro

Race: Human

Job: Traveler

LV: 3

HP: 120/120

MP: 50/50

STR: 40 VIT: 30

AGI: 150 DEX: 70

INT: 30 LUK: 10

Skills: Jack of all trades, master of none

Magic: None



So those were my stats. My AGI seemed strangely high... I had a feeling that my running and walking speed had gone up, was this the reason for it...? Even when the forest wolves were chasing me, when all was said and done, they never caught up. Also, there was no magic. I'm crushed.

"Your AGI is extremely high, huh."

The receptionist said coolly as she looked at my stats.

As we inspected it together, I heard someone burst into laughter at the bar.

"Only his AGI is high...cckk...ckk... He's a rabbit after all..."

"Hey...be nice....Puwahahh..."

What an annoying bunch. What was Gardo even doing?

"Hey, you two... Don't go around mocking a man's status like that..."

So he was keeping them in check. I could see that Ness was sitting rather sullenly next to him. What happened to him? Had he been scolded by Gardo?

"Well, uh, let's leave that stats for now. What's more interesting is this skill...I think."

I've been wondering about it too.

"This skill... It's a unique skill."

Just as she said this, everyone at the bar scrambled over to us as if rolling from their chairs. They reeked of alcohol!

"A unique skill!?"

"For the Black Rabbit!?"

"Hey, all you! It's against regulation to look at someone's skills without consent!"

Gardo was shouting something in the back, but the crowd had no intention of pulling back now.

"Skill... 'Jack of all trades, master of none'?"

"Huh? 'Jack of all trades, master of none'?"

The room suddenly fell silent. What? What, was this an impressive skill?

Nope, that was not the case.

"Ahahahaha! Jack of all trades, master of none!! I'm sure you hit the jackpot with such a name!"

"Ahahah! I'm finished! My stomach is about to burst!"

"Jack of all trades, master of none!! You can do anything, but you can't do anything! Bwahahahaha!!"

"That's amazing, Black Rabbit! You should be both the advanced guard and the rearguard!!"

I was surrounded by an unending storm of laughter. I could see Gardo and Ness standing back, in the corner of my vision, looking bewildered. Shit, they weren't going to be any help...

What did I do to deserve this? Isn't this just a little harsh?

Being stabbed by a thief, thrown out into the plains, attacked by a goblin, eating wolf meat and sleeping in trees, being chased by a whole pack of wolves, only to have the first town I run into ridicule me like this...

I felt quite discouraged for the first time in a while. My heart was getting colder by the minute. I wanted to get out of here. I silently reached for the pen on the counter and stabbed it into the flat of my palm.

"Asagi!?"

The receptionist asked in surprise. I allowed the blood to drip onto the status card and then raised my head.

"Is that alright then?"

“Uh, what...?”

“The registration.”

“Oh, yes... It’s complete...”

The status card was now registered to me. But for the present, I wanted nothing more than to leave this place.

Chapter 9: The Start of a Routine

Two weeks have passed since I first registered.

Ever since then, I've been ridiculed and called Black Rabbit every single day. After that, Ness must have heard of which inn I was staying at, because he paid me a visit.

"Asagi, uh...sorry...I, uh, didn't quite think it would take on like this..."

"It's fine. No one really knows what's going to happen with anything."

"That may be, but..."

He looked pretty sincere about it. There was no culture of kneeling on the ground here, but he lowered his head regretfully. I couldn't be angry with him after seeing him like that. There was no malice on Ness' face, even though he had been the one to first use the name. Though, there was clearly a little contempt there at first.

This was just a case of everyone else making a lot of noise like the fools that they were. The guild was civil when Gardo and the others were there, but the drunkards would jeer to a disturbing degree once they left.

Yes, there were days when Gardo and Ness were not at the guild. Hell, recently there would be more days where they were away. The two of them worked as a team and took on advanced quests together. The last one was towards the south of this town...they went deep into the forest from a different gate than the one I had entered in, and killed some orcs. The whole thing took them five days, so the guild house was pretty much the worst possible environment during that time. No matter how much they mocked and laughed, the guild did not intervene. They would, of course, interfere with fights that could result in injury, but they had a rule about not meddling in anything else. One must establish their own position on their own. That was the rule. I knew this for a fact because the bookworm at the 'QUESTIONS & OTHER' counter told me so. Her name was apparently 'Flo.' She never actually introduced herself,

but it was on her name tag.

“What will you do today?”

I was standing at the Quest Counter, which I’ve visited quite often recently. I was holding a torn piece of paper that I got from a notice that was nailed to the quest board.

“Ah, ‘Medicine Gathering’ again, I see. So you will be working in the forest. Please show me your status card.”

I was already holding it in my hand, and so I placed it on the counter.

“Yes, thank you. Please wait a moment. ...Yes, quest information is now registered. Good luck, and have a safe trip.”

The guild worker smiled pleasantly handed back my status card. I accepted the card back and repeated the now familiar words.

“Status open.”



Name: Asagi Kamiyashiro

Race: Human

Job: Adventurer(Rank: G)

LV: 10

HP: 180/180

MP: 70/70

STR: 58 VIT: 50

AGI: 190 DEX: 90

INT: 44 LUK: 11

Skills: Jack of all trades, master of none

Magic: None

Current Quest: Medicine Gathering

All Equipment: Head – none

Body – Leather armor

Arms – Leather gloves

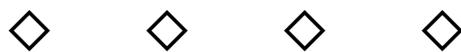
Legs – None

Feet – Leather shoes

Weapon – Iron sword

– Iron short sword

Accessories – None



Well, the quest was there. I said my thanks and turned on my heels. And of course, the usual insults came flying.

“Oi, is the Black Rabbit feeling vegetarian today as well?”

“Buwahahaha! He does love his leaves!”

Adventuring shits. They came here to the bar when it was still midday and drank. I once asked when it was that they worked, and they said that they were drinking off the money made by other people. But that didn’t mean that they never worked. They were all a part of different parties. Or in other words, ‘Clans’ that they were registered to, and they took turns earning money. It was a set rule for them, which apparently prevented fights over ‘whose money’ was being spent. It was quite the gathering of bastards. All of them. I hated them.

“Those plants can be used for anything, and they’re quite handy to have.”

“We’re so blessed to have the Black Rabbit, with his fondness for leaves!
Hahaha haha!!”

I had no intention of arguing with them, but the one-sided jabs did get on my nerves. But there was no point in firing back. I sighed once, then left the guild behind me.

I made my way towards the gathering area for the medicinal herbs that I always went to. This is the only quest I’ve been taking ever since becoming an adventurer. While it was rather boring, it was good for making money. But

appearances clearly meant something here, and there were few people who accepted this quest. Except for ‘rocks’ like me.

However, this quest was really nothing more than an excuse to go to the forest. My real targets were the goblins. I saw that my level had increased by 10 when I had just checked my status. When I had turned level 6 and went to the Reward Counter, the friendly guild worker had asked me about my ‘level suddenly being higher?’ I just said then, that I encountered a goblin and had no choice but to fight. Goblin slaying was restricted to F Rank adventurers, so they would usually have been forbidden for G Rankers like me.

And so I used the medicine as an excuse to invade the forests. Of course, I gathered the herbs as well. And I was able to use the money that I made through it to buy some equipment. The armor was a used piece sold at the armor shop. My sword was a trial weapon made by the blacksmith’s apprentice and was very cheap. The old billhook was melted down and made into a short sword. With my sword and short sword in hand and the help of the unique skill ‘Jack of all Trades...’ I was a type two-handed fighter now.

“Ho Asagi. Are you going to the forest?”

“Russell.”

He was standing right by the gate. I guess he was in charge of the south side today.

“I am. I’ll return before the sun sets.”

“Ah, you’ve walked through the hills. I’m sure you could handle the night?”

He gave a throaty laugh. I sighed.

“I don’t ever want to sleep in a tree again...”

“Hahaha! That story is a classic!”

A while ago, Russell had come to see how I was doing, during a dinner at the inn. It was then that I told him my entire story of coming to Fhiraldo, and apparently, the part about sleeping in a tree had amused him. He had laughed so hard that he had tears in his eyes. It was still laughter towards me, and yet it was one of the few moments where I felt a sense of comfort.

"Ugh... Anyway, I better get going."

"Aye, you be careful!"

He slammed a palm into my back. The pain was a sign of trust. His attitude towards me had not changed even when seeing others ridicule me as the Black Rabbit. He was a good person. Maris, the innkeeper, was also a kind person who always had a smile when greeting me. She had even offered a fifty percent discount after a week had passed and I asked to extend my stay. Of course, I rejected her offer...

In any case, I was now heading for the forest. To raise my level as I gathered herbs.

Chapter 10: Earning Experience, Earning Money

I arrived at the forest. Well, it's really just the entrance to it. You won't see any orcs until you go further deep inside. Speaking of orcs, they were known as monsters who would sometimes 'ravage' female warriors, and even here, they would sometimes kidnap women from the villages for purposes of breeding, and kill all the men.

"The nests of these orcs are always brutal. The women who become prey to them are kept alive to live out their days as slaves for breeding..."

Eventually, they tend to lose their sense of self. As a means of self-preservation. If they are saved, they are put into rehabilitation hospitals. It's to heal their destroyed minds.

I recalled what Gardo had said about them as I gathered the herbs and put them into my bag. These herbs were used in restorative potions, as their roots were full of magic sucked from the earth. But it was not as if the leaves were useless either, they had the ability to relieve fevers. This plant could almost be used for anything... I just needed to stuff them into this bag up to the brim and the quest would be complete. As soon as that was done, I scratched a mark onto a tree and headed deeper into the forest.

Of course, this was in order to kill goblins and raise my level. Thankfully, there were no forest wolves on this side of the woods. According to Russell, there was a different quality to the magic here that the wolves didn't like. On the other hand, there were plenty of goblins living here. And all I needed to do was to hunt packs with as few members as possible.

I walked cautiously for several minutes. Then I found them. It was a pack of goblins. This one had...six. It was more than what was ideal, but I could manage it as long as I surprised them.

First, I watch. They were swinging their game around and looking for bait... They seemed a little restless, but their guard was weak. This was because there were no monsters around to hurt them. While orcs lived in the forest, you had to go much deeper inside to encounter one. And so goblins were careless, and

so my ambush would work.

First, I throw my wooden spear. I was quite used to making these now, it only took me a few minutes. And that spear pierces into the goblin in the rear. It was all it took to immobilize the weak creature. But I run even before that goblin hits the ground. My strangely high AGI allows me to do this. It really was the meat of my stats. And so I was fast. I use my short sword to finish him off before thrusting the sword into the next target. Two down. It was too easy.

This is where all the goblins finally see what's happened. They become outraged as they see their comrades lying in the dirt and so they raise their weapons into the air. I swing my blade to sever off those very arms. The freed spear is now used to thrust into the prey in front of me, then the fool right next to him. Then I cut off the head of the next goblin that rushes towards me. Now there is only one left, and he turns tail and runs. He must have decided that this enemy was stronger than him. I take my short sword and launch it towards the fleeing goblin. It enters his back smoothly, as if it were being sucked right into him.

And now it is done. An easy task. In an RPG they would represent the weakest of the monsters. And so this is what happens when they encounter me. I'm kidding. I can't be too arrogant. Winning was about preparation.

Still wary of my surroundings, I collect the goblins weapons and tie them together with a quick rope made of vines. This was to bring back to the old blacksmith. This would also earn me a little money. You could laugh, but iron was iron no matter how old. After passing from the hands of so many owners, these would eventually turn into my own weapons. In other words, the cost of the materials was almost free. I was only paying to have them formed.

I hang the bundle of weapons in a tree just like I did the herbs and continue my trek through the forest.

Things went rather smoothly today after that, and all in all, I was able to kill twenty goblins. And I got fifteen iron blades. That was good. I could trade in this old sword and short sword for new weapons now. I would prioritize ease of movement when choosing new armor. I won't waste my AGI. I don't think I'll be able to survive if I don't make the most of that stat.

And so I walked back down the road to Fhiraldo, accompanied by the clanging of weapons and a somehow reinvigorating feeling of exhaustion.

The first thing I needed to do after getting back to the town was to visit the blacksmith near the south gate. Who knows what they'd say if I returned to the guild house like this. Well, I'm sure they all knew...there was no way those bastards hadn't found out. They'd probably rat me out. But I wasn't going to do anything until it was mentioned. This was my livelihood after all. It was how I could eat; it was important.

"Good evening. Is the Chief here?"

"Ho! Is that Asagi!"

From the smoke-filled back appeared the manager of this smithy, a dwarf called Aragira. I had once called him 'manager' and he had roared back, 'Call me Chief!' so I've been doing that ever since.

Dwarves. They tended to be blacksmiths, didn't they? He was one of those well-built types too. But one thing that was not usual was that he was not short. The Chief was apparently half-human and half dwarf. And so he was muscular and tall. A real mass of power. Though, apparently pure blooded dwarves were short here, as you'd expect.

"I've brought some weapons again if you don't mind. Also, I'd like a new sword and short sword."

"You've brought quite the load here... Very well. Weapons are over there. Choose any you like."

"Are these also test weapons your apprentice made?"

"Course they are! It's about an eon too soon for a Rock like you to hand one of my swords!"

While he was roaring at me, this was the way our conversations usually went down. There was no meaning behind it.

I pick up and inspect the swords stashed in a barrel and the short swords lined up on a chest. The thickness of the blades, the sharpness, the feeling when holding them. I look for one that does not feel inferior to my old swords. Even if

I had the ‘Jack of all Trades’ skill, I still had to use my body to learn how to wield them. Only the protagonist could rest on their laurels when it came to skills. And this in this world, there were no special settings for the protagonist.

“I think I’ll take these two then.”

“You! You’re really going to take the two best ones again, are you!”

“I’m really quite sorry.”

Aragira’s hands went to his head in exasperation. I grinned and put the blades in my sheaths. They were the same level of weapons, so they would fit into my sheaths perfectly. Which saved me from having to buy new ones.

I received the money for the goblins’ weapons and used it to pay for the new ones. It was really an unnecessary act, but the sad convenience store clerk in me could not rest easy without such proper transactions.

“Come back soon, Asagi.”

“Sure, Chief. See you.”

Aragira was also an important person who was kind to me. He looked at weapons and he looked at people. Apparently, I was a good one. Who knows what his criteria were, but it made me happy nonetheless.

And so I was feeling quite happy as I made my way over to the guild house. But it was not enough to put a lid on the rising feeling of dread as I got closer.

Chapter 11: A Transparent Lie

I left Chief's smithy and made my way to the guild house. You just needed to follow the road in front of the smithy towards the north in a straight line and you'd get there. My feet felt a bit heavy knowing the kind of atmosphere that would await me once there, but I couldn't hold onto these herbs forever. Their freshness was important.

"Ahhh...I'm tired...I hate this time of day..."

I grumbled without thinking. But this life as an adventurer was how I supported myself, it was necessary in order to live.

And more than anything, this whole deal about moving to another world had been something I had dreamed of.

Of course, there were things concerning killing that gave me pause. My life had been quite peaceful back in Japan. And so it wasn't too surprising that there would be a resistance to fighting. But after having to survive in the forest without civilization and then the plains, I realized that it was important to be rational in terms of where you were. Or so I told myself. But that was why I had no intention of changing the way I lived. Though, it still made my heart feel a little heavier.

I stand in front of the guild. You could hear the drunken clamor of the bar from outside. I force a lid over my heart and walk inside.

"Ho, Asagi. So you're back then."

"Gardo. I didn't know you were back."

My luck seemed pretty good today. Gardo was here. The adventurers around us glared at me viciously but that was easily ignored. Apparently, they didn't like how frankly I spoke to Gardo.

"Just a minute ago, really. You too?"

"Yeah. I picked some herbs."

"Hehe. What a liar you are."

"It's a not a lie. I have the herbs right here."

"I'm sure you do."

Shit. Even Gardo knew now. Oh, well. This was necessary.

For instance, had I only been picking herbs and raising my rank, my level wouldn't match my rank. If I went out to the forests or plains in that state, I'd just get trampled. In that case, I didn't see any harm in raising my level and learning how to fight in advance. I had speculated that this sort of thinking was what would separate the 'Rocks' from the 'Gemstones.'

After Gardo waved his hand and left, I went over to 'Rewards' and untied the sack that was attached to my waist and placed it on top of the counter.

"I'm Asagi. I've just returned from the Medicinal Herbs quest."

"Well done. I'll take the herbs and your status card now."

I took the card out of my pocket and handed it over. The thing was really light.

"Yes, I see. Please wait here one moment."

After this, they would check the state of the plants and determine the price. I'd have some time until they were done, so I might as well have a light meal here at the bar. The stares of the bastards would be annoying, but they would at least be quiet today. Now that I think of it, Ness wasn't here.

"Excuse me, do you have anything light I can eat?"

"Sure."

I sat down at the bar counter and ordered something to chew on from the master. A few looks were turned towards me but I barely noticed. Ness really wasn't here, huh.

"Ness ain't here."

Gardo called from the table. It seemed that he had noticed my little search.

"Looks like it. That's kind of rare."

"Well, the bastard had a good payout today. So it's off to the brothel."

"Hmm...you have such places here then."

"Aye, he was quite determined today too, something about 'winning her over today'... Well, I'm sure he'll be back before you know it."

I see... I was a little interested in this person Ness seemed devoted to, but not in the brothel itself. Diseases were no joke. It was a world of magic, so perhaps there were contraceptives and magical remedies, but I didn't know how trustworthy they were... Plus, it seemed like trouble. Getting involved in the troubles of others seemed like a rule in itself when it came to these stories about other worlds. Well, I didn't receive any special conditions as a protagonist, so perhaps I was safe. Still, being extra cautious was the trick to survival.

"Here you go!"

"Thank you."

I received the food from the master. Today's dish was chicken roasted with herbs, huh... I quite liked this one. It was easy to eat because of the bone. It was also softer than wolf meat and very juicy. The sharp spices stimulated my tired and empty stomach. I finished it in no time.

"Mr. Asagi. Your reward is ready. Are you here?"

I could hear the guild worker calling me, and so I quickly wiped my hands and mouth and left some money on the bar counter.

"Mr. Asagi."

The guild worker had come all the way over to the bar and was looking left and right before seeing me and calling me over. We walked back to the counter.

"Mr. Asagi. You're pretty close to your next rank."

"Am I really?"

"Yes, you gain one rank after finishing fifteen G rank quests. So, that is six more quests. Though, there is also another method."

"What kind of quests will be the most prominent in the next rank?"

I was curious about what this other method was, but that could wait. I

wanted to be more efficient once I reached F rank. And weeding was getting a little boring.

"The most prominent quests in F rank are goblin slaying. The goblins are fond of the mana around the southern part of the forest. You will be permitted to go out much further than before."

After saying as much, she looked at me and smiled mischievously. It was cute, but there was 'I know everything' meaning behind it. I couldn't say anything so I just smiled awkwardly and scratched at my cheek.

"Hehe. Well, I will bring your reward now, so please wait a moment."

"Ahaha...thank you."

How uncomfortable. I waited restlessly until the guild worker returned with a tray that carried my status card and the reward.

"Here, this is the reward for completing the quest. All of the herbs you've collected were in excellent condition. The owner of the druggist is always happy with them, so I've added a little bonus for you."

"Thank you very much. I intend to collect herbs again next time, so I'll keep their quality in mind."

"That would be great. The other G rank adventurers only bring back shriveled and torn plants..."

How can I bother to pick herbs! That's probably what they're thinking as they gather them... Idiots. It's much better to do these kinds of slow jobs carefully.

"Thank you for coming in today. We hope to see you again soon."

"Yes, thank you."

The reward was forty pieces of copper and one silver as a bonus. I put them in a purse and left the counter.

Well then, I had nothing left to do today. Perhaps I should return to the inn... That was what I was thinking as I left the guild house before I was immediately surrounded.

"Hey, Black Rabbit. Aren't you getting a little arrogant lately?"

A tall adventurer with a scar on his cheek said as he glowered down at me.

"I've gotten used to questing and I suppose I'm proud of it. I can't wait to go picking herbs again tomorrow!"

"Are you making fun of me you little shit!"

The bastard's arm stretched out to grab me right there. He was slow. 'Jack of all Trade' taught me self-defense against people as well. I dodged the arms just like the image that played in my head showed. Then I rushed behind him planted my foot in his back and kicked him to the ground. After that, I turned around and ran towards the town.

"Wait! I'll get you!"

"Damn, he's fast...!"

He may have been asking me to wait, but there was no idiot in the universe who would do that. I ran through crowds of people as I made my way back to the inn.

While I was running, I thought I saw a teary-eyed Ness walking on the road, but it was probably just me.

Chapter 12: Crystal

I went through a few back alleys before finally arriving at the inn. I guess the bastards couldn't catch me. They clearly weren't much.

The bell jingled loudly as I opened the front door and went inside. This sound was now very familiar to me.

"Oh, you're early today."

Maris' face popped out from under the counter.

"Yeah, I'm back. Got chased by a few adventurers on the way."

"There are still people complaining about you? Really, such people are not fit to be called men!"

"Haha. Well, there are quite a few of them."

"That's quite disappointing though..."

We chatted idly for a while, until she handed me the room key.

"Ah, Asagi. It'll be your second week today. What will you do?"

"Extend, of course."

"Hahaha. Do you mean to just stay here and live with me?"

"I'd love to do just that, but I want to go out on a journey, once I have enough money..."

"Is that so. Well, I better give up then."

She chuckled. I don't know how I would ever be able to repay her. Not just her. Russell, and the Chief. I'll throw Gardo and Ness in there as well.

After paying the amount for the extension, I then went back to my room, plopped on my bed and took out my status card.

"Status open."



Name: Asagi Kamiyashiro

Race: Human

Job: Adventurer (Rank: G)

LV: 15

HP: 218/218

MP: 86/86

STR: 71 VIT: 65

AGI: 228 DEX: 105

INT: 53 LUK: 11

Skills: Jack of all trades, master of none

Magic: None

Current Quests: None

All Equipment: Head – none

Body – Leather armor

Arms – Leather gloves

Legs – None

Feet – Leather shoes

Weapon – Iron sword

– Iron short sword

Accessories – None



"My level went up... And my AGI broke 200, huh... How high can it go? Though, I don't know what the average even is."

There was nothing to do but laugh at how unbalanced it all was, but I couldn't complain about being fast. Being fast with everything was the trick to living.

I stashed the status card back in my pocket, grabbed a change of clothing and headed off to the public bathing area. The inn had its own baths. Which was great for me. I loved bathing. Taking an early morning bath after a long night of

work was the best...

Just as I took off my clothes in the changing room, a few other guests at the inn came in. After a short greeting, I showered and then hopped into the tub.

"Ahhh...that's reinvigorating..."

I sigh without thinking. Who wouldn't? You can't help it. It's like a phenomenon, I think.

After being warmed through, I quickly get out. I don't take long baths.

Then it was just a matter of getting dressed, eating dinner and going to bed. I've started to really settle down here now, so I tried to spend a little time before bed to reflect on the day and think about my future plans.

Today's goblin hunting had gone well. The guild house was quiet because of Gardo. If only he were always there. Things got annoying after that. There was a high likelihood that they would try something again outside of the guild house. I better be prepared.

As for the good news, my level went up. Very good. I wanted to reach level 20 before going up to Rank F. So I suppose I had no choice but to go goblin hunting tomorrow as well... I think I'll head out earlier than usual tomorrow. Better get some sleep then. Yeah, I'll do that.

I pull the blanket up to my chin and close my eyes. Ahh, it was a stark contrast to sleeping in the trees... I was practically asleep now. Two, three breaths and my consciousness was gone.



The goblin hunting, or should I say, herb gathering went well the next day. I dug the dirt around the roots so as to cleanly remove the plants before putting them in my bag. Then it was off to chasing goblins until nightfall. Strangely, I never bumped into any other adventurers. I even asked the girl at Reception about this once.

"Ahhh. Well, there aren't many newcomers here, lately. Everyone else goes out the west gate and to the forest with all the wolves. By the way, Asagi. Did you go deep into the forest? Hmm?

Apparently, I was one of the only ‘Rocks’ around here. It was kind of lonely to not have any contemporaries around, but it also meant no fighting or competing. It was kind of great to be able to work in peace.

Then a few days passed and I had fifteen successful quests under my belt and so was raised to Rank F. Or as they called it, ‘Obsidian.’ I was better than Rock, I guess. But I think they could have spent more time coming up with a name...

Well, this was their old custom, so there was no point in thinking about it. They clearly didn’t.

My level had also passed 20. I felt rewarded for my efforts, but the guild worker had glared at me with a frightening look. It was a look that said, ‘Damn bastard. You’ve gone too far just because people were staying quiet!’ But I could bear it, I was stronger now. Don’t lock eyes, don’t make excuses, stay friendly. That’s all you needed to get out of most scrapes.

“Asagi. Is Mr. Asagi here?”

The guild worker at Rewards, who always helped me, was calling. But I had already received the reward for the herbs...

“Yes, what is it?”

“Mr. Asagi, since your level has reached 20, your rank will be raised to E. Please hand over your status card.”

Hmm? But I only just reached rank F?

“Please hand over your status card.”

“Um, but I was raised to F just now...”

“Ranks can go up through the number of successful quests as well as level count. As you have willfully hopped your way up, I discussed it with the guild master and it was decided that your rank would go up as well. So please, hand over your status card.”

There was something harsh in the way she said it... But really, had I known this I would have raised my level even more.

But she looked like she was about to explode, so I quickly handed over my card. She disappeared in the back room for a moment and then returned. That

was quick.

“Mr. Asagi, you are now Rank E. Commonly called, ‘Crystal.’”

“Thank you.”

I took my card back.

“Please don’t push yourself too hard. There’s no coming back once you die.”

“You’re very kind. You take care of yourself too, miss.”

“Thank you. But my name is not ‘miss.’ I have a proper name, ‘Fiona.’ So please refer to me by that name from now on!”

That was an out of the blue introduction. It was hard to tell how familiar adventurers were supposed to be with guild workers.

“Well then, Fiona. Have a good day.”

“You too, Asagi.”

So saying, she gave me a wink. This girl, was she coming onto me?

That was the idiotic thought in my head as I left the guild house. But, of course, I was alert to my surroundings. There was a thick atmosphere of unease.

In other words, it was time for an all-out dash.

“Ahh! That shit. He’s running away again!!”

“Damn! He’s fast!”

“How dare he talk with Fiona so lightheartedly!!!”

Spite, scorn, envy. Their words were full of it. Unfortunately, I had better things to do right now. So I left them there and set off for the Chief’s smithy.

Chapter 13: We Met at a Street Stall

"Hello."

"Ho, Asagi. Do you need new weapons again?"

Chief Aragira was wiping his sweat with a towel as he came out from the back. He was as imposing as ever.

"Yes. I want new ones."

"Damn it, you've only just bought some the other day!"

"But the thing is...I kind of ruined them."

I went a little too hard out there in the woods. I had started sneaking up behind goblins I found, and stabbed them from the back...before I knew it there were chips and cracks in the blade. Had I fought a moment longer last night, things could have turned real sour.

"And I was just elevated to a 'Crystal' today, so I wanted a nice weapon to commemorate it."

"What? 'Crystal'? You've only just become an adventurer!"

"My level kind of just hit 20 after I killed some goblins. And the guild worker told me that I'll be 'Rank E from today.'"

"Ahh...well, don't push yourself too hard, alright...?"

He seemed more exasperated than impressed. That's odd...this seemed like a good time to congratulate me a little.

"So you want something to commemorate, eh...very well! I shall craft you a weapon!"

Yes! Chief's weapons had an incredible reputation, and I had been hoping for this. While the price would be higher, so would the quality and sharpness, so I didn't mind. I was starting to feel that my old weapons were not adequate anymore.

"Even so, you're still a baby bird of an E Ranker. I can't give you anything too

special. You understand?"

"Yes, of course."

He wasn't being malicious by that. The thing was, even if I mowed down enemies with the finest blades, I would not receive experience from it. The enemies' weakness, the parts that wouldn't chip your sword when you cut it, such as the parts between bones, that was all information and experience that didn't appear in your status. You would never learn what parts should be cut if you can ignore all that and cut through shells and bones from the start. That's what Chief was getting at.

"And so I'll give you sword stronger than iron. Learn more. Experience. If you can bring it back before it breaks, I'll sharpen it for you."

"Thank you, Chief."

He folded his arms and looked away.

"Bah!"

With a warm feeling in my heart, I accepted the reservation card for weapon crafting from Chief. It would take 6 days for it to be finished. He allowed me to borrow some of his apprentice's weapons for free until then.

Of course, I took the best ones.

I put the borrowed swords in my sheaths and left the smithy. Weary of my surroundings, I tried to look normal as I walked through the town. The sun had already set, and the sky was changing into a star-filled night. There were street stalls on the main road whose smells were stimulating my stomach and inviting me. I should eat outside once in a while...

I wandered around a little, looking for something to eat for dinner when my shoulder bumped into a passerby. Embarrassingly, the smells had dulled my awareness a little.

"I'm terribly sorry."

I turned to the other person and bowed my head. When I looked up, I saw a person who was taller than me and wearing a mask over their face. The pattern on the mask...what is it? Eyes?

"I'm sorry as well. I wasn't watching where I was going."

"Oh...um, can you see with that on?"

I couldn't help but ask. I don't know, it was just very interesting.

"Yes, it's enchanted. But the food over there looked so good..."

It was the same stall that I had been eyeing. Both of us looked over at the stall where a dish consisting of fried noodles was being made. Then the mask-wearing stranger's belly grumbled. It was quite audible.

"Ummph...mm..."

It was followed by fake coughing which did little to disguise it... It was kind of cute.

"I'm hungry as well. Would you join me?"

"You don't mind...?"

"As an apology for crashing into you. Let me get you dinner."

"But, I bumped into you as well..."

"It's fine, it's fine."

Let's just eat. We could argue about splitting the bill later if we wanted. Of course, it would be a short argument once we were finished eating.

"We'll take two of these."

"Coming right up!"

I paid after receiving the food. We then walked a little and settled at a park that was away from the main road.

Sometimes, I would kill time over here on days where a quest ended earlier than usual. It was a nice little spot.

"Here."

"You shouldn't have, but thank you."

"It's fine."

We sat on a bench with our food.

And then I became curious. Could this person even eat with that mask on?

“Mmph, mmm...”

The mask was being noisily removed. Oh, it just comes off then... Until now I had been imagining things, such as it being a ‘limiter’ to suppress a power that was too strong, or perhaps there was a tribe that wore masks every day, or it was the sign of a dying race of people who lived on the frontier, or it was some kind of training. I felt rather stupid now.

“Hahh... Let’s eat then.”

But the face that appeared from underneath the mask was that of a very beautiful woman.

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I had now finished eating. I never did find out what it tasted like, and it had looked so appetizing before buying it. The masked stranger, now an unmasked woman, was still chewing on her noodles. Her expression showed the kind of happiness one has when eating something delicious. It was cute. I kept stealing glances at that expression when suddenly, our eyes met.

“Hmm? Is something wrong?”

“Uh, no... You looked like you were really enjoying it.”

“Ah, well, you shouldn’t stare so much.”

Then she blushed. Cute.

But on the other hand, this was an uncomfortable position... No, it was not as if I wanted to run away, but there was something very nerve-racking about sitting next to someone so beautiful. I felt like I was suffocating. I didn’t hate it. Who didn’t love a beautiful woman? They were easy on the eyes, but...

“Mmm... Well, that was delicious. Thank you.”

“Was it really?”

“It was. I would eat it again tomorrow.”

“Hehe. Good thing we chose that one. Well, now that we’re no longer hungry...”

I stand up and stretch my limbs.

"Let's disband."

"I'm really sorry. It was my own carelessness, but you even got me dinner."

"No, don't mention it. It's much better to eat with company."

"Oh, right..."

She blushed again. She had a cool, beautiful face but seemed to have a bashful side.

"Well, see you around."

"Ah, uh. Thanks for dinner. See you."

"Yeah. Good night."

I casually waved a hand and walked away. Then turned the corner and headed back to the inn. Of course, I still had to be alert in order to avoid the scum who would try to catch me. But then again, I was nervous as hell and completely off guard until a moment ago... I should be more careful. I shook my head, shifted gears, and walked on.

Then, there was a faint but definite voice that reached my ears.

"What, what do you want!"

I quickly turn around. It was the voice of the woman in the mask. I dash back towards through the park and to the town square. There the woman stood, the mask was halfway on her face. Five to six men surrounded her.

"Hey, what are you doing!"

I shouted as I ran towards them, my hands were on the pommels of my swords as I glared. All the faces of the men who turned to look at me were very familiar.

"Hello, Black Rabbit."

Chapter 14: Running Man, Running Woman

What the hell were they doing here? Why were they surrounding the masked woman?

I tried to observe them coolly as I addressed them.

“What’s this? Why are you blocking her?”

“Eh? It’s none of your business. Get lost.”

“Unfortunately, for you, I just had dinner with her. I can’t just say, ‘alright’ and leave.”

Perhaps they meant to abduct her as some kind of trap? For instance, I would have to leave all my money and disappear or they would hurt her.

“Hey, Black Rabbit. Leave your money here and scram before you regret it. Who knows what might happen to this lady here if you don’t?”

Woah...template...I was speechless. What is this? Was there a script?

“Hey! Be quick about it!!”

“I’m not giving you anything, you stupid bastards! Let her go now and begone! Before I beat you to a pulp!”

“You little shit...you’re just the Black Rabbit...!”

The bastard leader had veins popping out near his sideburns as his hand went down to the sword at his waist. As if on cue, the rest of the men flashed vulgar smiles and unsheathed their own swords.

There was no turning back now. There was nothing left to do but fight. However, I would prefer it if no one died here tonight. There was something too pathetic about the thought of Russell escorting me to prison.

And so I kept my sword sheathed as I raised it. The leader of the gang saw me quickly wrap the sword belt around the handle and shouted.

“Black Rabbit!! Do you think you’re playing with us!?”

“I’m not playing. But the Chief gave me this sword...I won’t have it drinking

such filth from you!!”

I held both swords in my hands now. The shortsword’s sheath was fixed with a button, so it took me no time to prepare. And then I ran. Of course, not at full speed. Not yet.

“Arragghhh!”

The gang leader swung his sword up high. I dropped my posture low, somersaulting just as the sword dropped, missing me. The sound of the blade crashing into the ground echoes behind me. In front were the followers who had made a wall to block the masked woman. I targeted the weakest looking of the bunch; charged at full speed and collided with a tackle.

“Guwhagh!!”

There would not have been much weight behind the impact, but there would be a unique bite from the disproportionate AGI, surely. I hoped anyway. Having broken through the wall, I now stood in front of the masked woman and faced the others, sword ready.

“Are you alright?”

“Uh, yes. Are you?”

“For now, anyway. Can you run?”

I asked, stealing a quick glance behind me.

“Of course.”

“Then you should go to the guardhouse near the southern gate. I have a friend there. A captain named Russell. He should help you.”

“What about...you?”

“Me? Running is the one thing I’m good at.”

I said jokingly. She looked at me a little surprised at first but then started to laugh.

“You’re a funny one. Tell me your name. I’m Daniela.”

“I’m Asagi. Asagi Kamiyashiro.”

The masked woman, known as Daniela, nodded. Then she began to run in the other direction.

"You...you think you can just mock us..."

The leader passed through his gang to stand in front of me. He was in a real rage now. Even the men around him had beastly, shining eyes as they brandished their weapons. They clearly wanted nothing more than to kill me.

Which was blinding them of their surroundings. Such as the fact that this was a park.

"It's too bad, but I have no intention of fighting you. I'm stuffed after eating. I want to get some rest!"

The town was paved with stone. But around the park was different. There was dirt around my feet and a lot of sand. And so I thrust my sword into the ground and shoveled the sand into the air.

"Ghaa...! Damn it!!"

The twinkling, hungry eyes would have collected quite a bit of that sand. Which would allow me plenty of time to run. I ran, following the same direction that Daniela went. She was apparently quite fast herself, as she was nowhere in sight. I disappeared into crowds as I ran down the main street. Several people looked back in annoyance, but they'd have to excuse me. This was an emergency. My life was in danger. The trick to getting through dangerous situations was to prioritize your own survival. I looked back now and again to make sure they weren't following, as I headed to the southern guardhouse.

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The food at the stall had looked so good. Good enough to stop me in my tracks and stare. It was the same for the man who bumped into me. But he didn't chastise my lack of attention and apologized first. Upon realizing that I was hungry, he even bought me dinner. A kind person. His unusually black hair was quite long, almost like a woman's. His eyes were somewhat hidden behind his bangs, but he had smiled gently.

Our dinner together at the park was a quiet, peaceful one. Far from the fights at the bar and the shouts of the street stalls. It was a different world. It was a

good time. Good food. I wanted to slowly enjoy the taste of it, but he finished his food very quickly. I suppose he had nothing better to do, because he kept staring at me as I ate. It was kind of embarrassing. One shouldn't stare at a lady when she is eating.

We finished eating. He said that he would return to the inn he was staying at and waved goodbye before leaving the park. And then it happened, just as I too got up and decided to look for a place to stay.

A group of men who had been hiding behind the trees, sprung out and surrounded me. Each and every one of them wore a vulgar smile. I couldn't help but raise my voice in surprise, but that ended up being a good thing. Because he returned. From what I could tell, these people knew each other. But not as friends, no, they were enemies. They had called him Black Rabbit, which he did not seem to take kindly to. It may sound adorable when just hearing the words, but to him, there was nothing but derision in them.

He and the leader of the group unsheathed their swords. I had assumed that a duel was about to begin, but he only dodged the attack and then continued to crash into one of the men in front of me as if he were a heavily armored knight. There was no panic in his face, he was only concerned about me. It was very kind. I could not understand why these men had gathered to torment him so. I could feel an anger rising up within me, but he told me to head for the guardhouse. He said that I should call for help, but I think he just wanted to allow me to escape. I hesitated for a moment, but there was no time to lose. I asked him his name and etched it in my heart so I would not forget it. This person who cared about me, regardless of the situation.

Asagi. Wait for me. I will reach this captain known as Russell.

I use wind magic to vault over walls and move over roofs as I make my way to the southern gate.

Chapter 15: A Discovery

After running for several minutes, I finally arrived at the guardhouse at the southern gate. Seeing as there were a number of guards hurriedly running in and out, it seemed that Daniela too had arrived safely. And just as I was thinking about going inside, Daniela came out of the door with a guard in tow. A moment later, Russell followed.

“Asagi!”

“Daniela, I see you made it here safely.”

“Aye, I explained the situation to Captain Russell.”

Russell nodded and said that he was now leaving to arrest the adventurers.

“To be honest, I was getting quite angry with this trend of making you out to be a fool. I don’t appreciate them speaking ill of a man I rescued. But just leave it to me, I’ll have them thrown into prison, even for the smallest of crimes if I have to!”

“Russell, I’m grateful for the thought. But you shouldn’t abuse your power.”

“Hahaha!”

“Hey, Russell.”

He looked away from me and began to walk on. No, I really was happy for the thought, but.

“Asagi. The captain did listen to what I said with a serious ear. I think it should be fine.”

“Well, I do trust him...”

I mumbled as we watched the group of guards running, their armor clanking as they set off. There was something suffocating about being in the center of such an uproar, when I had rarely been anywhere but the sidelines all of my life.

As I and Daniela stood there watching, a young guard came and guided us into the building.

The inside of the house was overflowing with stuff. From documents to mysterious boxes... Contraband, they later told me. It was a bit unsettling. I tried to avoid touching anything as we went further in towards the back and into a small room. There were two chairs, a desk, and a bed. And while there was a window in the room, it was set with iron bars. Wasn't this a room to put villains in?

"I'm terribly sorry, but you must rest here today."

"It makes me feel as if I were guilty of something..."

"Hahaha. Rooms that are difficult to escape from are also the safest."

It's not what you say, but how you say it, right? It was what it was. I didn't care to get involved with anyone else out there now. But there was still one problem.

"There's only a single bed here."

"I'm very sorry, but that's all we have at this time. Please share it."

The hell was he talking about? ...Is he stupid? I looked at him with as much exasperation as I could muster, before slumping down into the chair.

"If it's all you have, then I'll just rest here. Daniela, you can use the bed."

"Are you sure? You won't get much rest sitting on that chair."

"No, I'm actually used to it."

"Are you..."

Yes. What can I say? I'm used to sleeping over a desk. I would sometimes get so tired during my night shift at work, that I once fell asleep in the office. The manager was nice enough to let me sleep then. And ever since that time, I would sleep there right after work. And that was how I became accustomed to sleeping on desks.

"Well, that solves the problem. I shall return to my guarding duties!"

He gave a sharp salute and left the room. No, it's not solved! I just compromised! I shouted inwardly, but only allowed a sigh to escape me. I should just rest for now. It's been a while since I've run this much. I had been so

tired when leaving the park, but I wasn't sleepy at all anymore. I was bored.

"By the way, Daniela. You're pretty fast, huh. I went after you only seconds later, but you were nowhere in sight. I was quite surprised."

I had nothing better to do, so I tried talking to her. Also, I was curious. Maybe she was a fellow AGI hoarder.

Daniela sat down on the bed and looked at me as she began to speak.

"Ahh. Then, of course, you would not have seen me. I was running on the rooftops."

"You what?"

Rooftops? Was there a ladder there that I didn't see?"

"With wind magic. I can make my body lighter and add a boost when I jump. That height is really not that difficult at all."

"Wind magic..."

I was reminded of how close the presence of magic actually was. Who would have thought she was a magician? She looked so much like a knight-type.

"Are you good at it?"

"I suppose so. I'm adept at a combined martial art that uses magic and swords. Oh, please keep my magical abilities a secret, will you? I'll be hounded by adventurers if word gets out."

"Hmm...I didn't know such a thing existed. I envy you, I can't even use magic."

"You don't have the aptitude?"

"No, I, I don't know. I don't even know how to find out."

Daniela then stood up and sat on the chair opposite me.

"The aptitude test is easy. You just need to look at the color of the magical energy inside your body. Wait a moment."

She took out her mask from a pocket and put it on. Then she stared through the mask and into my face. I was becoming nervous... This aptitude test could have a massive impact on the way I would plan my life.

"Good, now just concentrate. Imagine that there is something flowing inside of you, circulating. Then the magic should move within you."

"Mm..."

I closed my eyes and tried to imagine it. Just then, 'Jack of all trades' triggered, and I could visualize the magic circulating through me. It was as if the use of magic, or hearing about the actual existence of magic had solidified the image in my mind.

And so I concentrated all my power into it. I could then feel something moving, starting from my core and flowing out towards the rest of my body. It reached every corner before returning to the center, circulating.

Then the magical source began to flow, little by little. It ran, flowing like small rivulets that connected into larger rivers as they coursed through my veins.

But then I felt something within that river. It was around my stomach. I considered it, then understood. It was the place where the thief had stabbed me. And the moment I understood it, the heat revived within me. It was hot, so very hot. But that too only lasted a moment. The unbearable heat turned cool, then cold and eventually froze over. The flow of the river began to stagnate. I became desperate for the flow of magic to continue; increasing the volume.

And then the ice was slowly pushed away. It was a glacier now. The magical glacier continued to run through me. Eventually, the ice began to melt. But every time it passed near the wound, a large block of ice would form.

"Good. We're done now."

I opened my eyes then. The sharpness in my senses dissipated, and I remembered where we were.

"Hahh...that was tiring. So how was it?"

Daniela removed her mask and folded her arms.

"It was a strange color. At first, the flow was colorless. That is a magic that most people have. But then it turned red for an instant. Then it turned blue. This was the color that coursed through your body the most, but that too turned purple and then back to blue... It was very unstable. But in a way, that

state could be considered a kind of stability. It was very strange.”

It was as if the heat and the coldness I had felt were manifested as colors. It was proof that what I had imagined had been conveyed directly to Daniela.

“I see... So, is there any magic that I can use?”

“A lack of color means a lack of the attributes. This is a kind of magical energy that everyone has. Red is for fire. It would allow you to burn things or cause explosions. I only saw that color in you for a brief instant, so I doubt you would be good at it.”

Uh huh. So I wouldn’t be able to cause epic explosions like a cheater.

“And deep blue is for ice. After many changes, you mostly stayed on that color. It means that you must be adept with ice magic. And last is purple, which is for water. Perhaps not as strong as ice, but ice will turn to water when heat is added. Water will turn to ice when robbed of heat. This cycle is complete within your body. Considering all of this, the fire magic must exist inside of you as a cushion for the ice magic and the water magic. And so it is ice and water. Those are the attributes you should be skilled with.”

It was surprising, the ever-changing colors were flowing for such a reason. A smile slowly crept on my face.

Hehehe...Hahahah...Ahahahahaha!!!

So I wasn’t just an agile ‘Jack of all trades, master of none’!

I was an agile ‘Jack of all trades, master of none’ who could use some magic!!

I was so happy that I had tears in my eyes.

Chapter 16: The End of the Uproar

Good news. Asagi Kamiyashiro can use magic. Ice and water. And a little fire too. I can't believe it, this is amazing. A humble convenience store clerk like me can use magic. So, just how do you use it? You just think about it?

"What is important is to visualize it. The image created in your mind becomes fuel for the energy inside you and the phenomenon occurs. The chanting works as a kind of support to that. If you can visualize it well, you won't even need to chant. Just as I have no need to."

I guess there was no cheat for that. Magicians must have to work really hard to get to that point. I should give it a shot.

Let's see... I'm supposed to be good with ice, so maybe I'll try to cool the moisture in the air and lower the temperature.

"Mmm....mmmm...."

I imagine that I'm emanating magical energy that spreads throughout the room. Then I rob the moisture of heat and begin to cool it.

"Asagi."

"Mmm...!"

"Mmmggg...what?"

"It's cold."

Oh. My breath had turned white. Success. That wasn't too hard. Didn't take too long either. This could be pretty fun if I could instantly create ice.

I thought about returning the temperature back to normal as I used fire magic, until my breath was no longer visible. Then I shut it off before it got too warm.

"You learn fast, Asagi. You can visualize things well. I think you should be able to use lots of different magic in no time."

"I hope so."

In fact, I was sure that this magic was affected by ‘Jack of all trades.’

As it was a power not visible to the naked eye, I did not see the typical split-screen inside of my head. It was hard to believe that I could use it so easily when it was my first time. And it was not as if I had any special settings as the protagonist.

Though, it likely meant that I would only be able to use very common spells at best. But I wasn’t about to whine. This was still magic. It was like I was in a dream.

After that, Daniela and I talked about magic until she slowly started to doze off. And so she went to her bed to sleep and I went to my desk to sleep. I suppose I was quite tired after all. Though, I didn’t dream that night.

There was something depressing about seeing the sunrise through iron bars. It did nothing to raise your spirits. It was as if I had been thrown into prison for a crime that I had no memory of.

Sighing, I stand up and stretch my limbs. Daniela was still curled up in her bed and sleeping peacefully. Seeing her sleeping like that, I felt justified in having given up the bed, and I smile. Now that my stiff joints were loosened, I was wondering what I should do next, when the door was knocked from the other side.

“Yes.”

“Asagi? Good morning. Sleep well?”

“Morning, Russell. Uh, the desk was very comfortable, yes.”

“Hahaha, glad to hear it. Listen. We finished arresting all the men who harassed you this morning. They’ve all been thrown into a cell for now.”

“I knew you’d get it done.”

“Those men, we had to chase them all over town. Finally, they grew tired and we knocked them down and tied them up. It was nothing!”

He laughed boisterously. The captain was different from the rest. That guard last night could learn a thing or two from him.

Then Daniela stirred.

“Mm...what...is that noise...”

“Good morning, Daniela.”

“Mmm...Asagi...good...”

It seemed like she wasn't good with mornings. The sharp beauty from yesterday was nowhere to be seen. The only thing that was there was a sleepy-eyed, sluggish creature with tousled hair.

“Come on, get up. We should go and wash up.”

“Mmmm...”

I take her hand and help her to stand up. We then headed for the well in the back that I had used when first arriving here. So it was pretty familiar.

After that, we visited Russell's room where I told him that we'd be returning to the inn to have breakfast. Apparently, Daniela wasn't staying anywhere, and so she accompanied me.

“I'm sorry...I was going to look for an inn right after you left last night.”

“Well, it's not your fault. I should be sorry for getting you involved in my business.”

“Don't. The important thing is that we're both safe.”

She said and smiled, the slothful creature of the morning that was in her, had now vanished.

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I explained the situation to Maris at the Spring Wind inn. She was incredibly happy to hear that the men would not be bothering me again. Then I introduced Daniela and it was decided that she would stay too.

“I'll give you a good deal as a friend of Asagi!”

Her usual acquaintance discount made it easy for Daniela to decide.

We ate our breakfast there and then head to the guardhouse. Though, this time it was not to the one near the southern gate. It was the central guardhouse that was facing the Adventurer's Guild near the center of the town. This place had a dungeon where the bastard leader and all his followers had

been dumped, so they could enjoy the night together. And now we had come to identify them.

We explained what had happened the previous night at the office counter, which was quickly related to Russell and we were led through. After passing several doors, we down a long hall that led to stairs going downward. The air suddenly became very chilly.

“Asagi, are you sure that these are the men?”

“Yes. All of them. They tried to harm me and Daniela.”

Behind the thick iron bars sat the adventurers, bound with rope and wearing the most bitter of expressions. I, on the other hand, felt elated. I liked this!

“Damn, what fools...hahaha... What should we do with them?”

“Uh, what do you mean?”

“I have the authority to send them to the gallows. These men drew their swords. If they were ready to kill, then they should be ready to die.”

“Ahh...”

To be honest, death for attempted murder seemed a little harsh from my point of view? Really. I knew we were in a ‘kill or be killed’ kind of world. But there were still sensibilities that I couldn’t quite escape.

“Is there any other way?”

“There is a system of enslavement for criminals. The mines at Mount Alessa in the south.”

I see. A slave system. As a twenty-first century being, this was also not a welcoming thought. But it was at least less final than death. Well, at least in my mind.

“Daniela. What do you think?”

“Indeed... I also prefer avoiding unnecessary bloodshed. If you agree with it, I think that falling into slavery would adequate.”

“Yes. I was thinking that too. Then that is our decision, Russell.”

“Understood. They will be stripped of their Adventurer’s license and through

the compassion of Asagi and Daniela, be sent to labor at the Alessa mines for ten years."

He faced us and did a sharp salute before grinning.

"You're a kind person. But be careful that people do not take advantage of it. And come to me whenever you need help. Because I will always be your ally."

Chapter 17: A New Routine

The Black Rabbit incident was finished. I think. It would really depend on the reaction of the Adventurer's Guild that I was now headed for.

In other news, I and Daniela had decided to party up.

We had been discussing how this whole thing started after leaving the guardhouse, which led to this decision.



"When I first came to this town, I was being chased by a pack of forest wolves. I was practically rolling, the way I tumbled into the western gate. Some adventurers saw me then, and because of my hair, said I 'looked like a black rabbit.' That was the start of it."

"A whole pack? Were you alright?"

"Ah, yes. I found this out later, but I have really high AGI. Well, maybe it wasn't that high at the time... Anyway, I was able to run without them catching up to me. And the man I asked for help at the time was..."

"Captain Russell, I presume."

"Correct. If he hadn't been near the gates then, I would have probably been eaten alive."

It was that dangerous. I thought I was going to die, again...

"I see... Hmm... Asagi, we shall form a party."

"Huh?"

"Huh?"

"No, uh, what led you to that decision?"

"I'm too worried about you to leave you alone. You're just a rookie, but you've been raising your level in absurd ways, haven't you?"

She was sharp... I straightened my back and looked back at her.

"Now what gave you that idea?"

"You just said 'it wasn't that high at the time.' That must mean it is at least somewhat high right now, no? But you're a rookie who should not have experienced more than a few battles. But Asagi, you really are quite active in terms of fighting, aren't you?"

I had exposed myself. I look away without thinking.

"..."

"Hehe. It's obvious to anyone who actually listens to what you say. I won't ask you to stop. But, I'm worried. And so, we should fight together."

"Are you sure?"

"Yes."

"Then... I look forward to working with you, Daniela."

"Likewise. Can I trust you to have my back?"

"Haha. It's a bit early for that."



That's how it happened. It was no big deal. Daniela was worried about me. A person she had just bumped shoulders with last night.

There had been many unpleasant things that had happened to me in this world. Whether it was sleeping in trees, walking forever, fighting with monsters or being called Black Rabbit.

But there were also many kind people who cared about me.

When all was said and done, I was quite blessed. I realized once again, that it was the connections between people that was the most important trick to living.

I entered the adventurer's guild in much the same way I always did. Gardo and Ness were waiting for me inside.

"Asagi, I'm sorry."

"Please forgive me!"

The two men said with lowered heads. The atmosphere inside of the guild

house was dead quiet.

“Gardo, Ness.”

“You asked me to ‘deal with it,’ but I couldn’t do anything. I couldn’t even help you.”

“I was drunk and my public announcement has now led to such an incident! I should have done more than apologize, I should have done something...”

“Hey, you two. Please stop that.”

“But...”

“It’s fine. It’s finished. The troublemakers are gone, and you’ve already apologized. Also, I’m sure you’ll do something about anyone else who calls me Black Rabbit from here on out?”

They raised their heads. They both looked so full of regret that tears were threatening to fall from their eyes.

“Come on, don’t look like that. You two are the first adventurers I met when arriving here. You came because you were worried about me. I’m thankful for that.”

“You dumb shit... We are on duty!”

Gardo looked away and spat. Ness was wiping at his reddened eyes.

“Asagi, I’m real sorry! From now on, we’re comrades!”

“Aye, we’re now on equal footing! Does anyone here have any complaints!?”

Gardo glared towards the bar. While they weren’t involved in last night’s incident, they were all part of the jeering crowd. They now looked at their glasses as if to avoid Gardo’s stare.

“Well, that seems to settle it.”

“That went well, Asagi.”

Daniela said as she placed a hand gently on my shoulder.

“Yes, thanks to you as well, Daniela.”

“Don’t mention it. We are also comrades who are equals.”

She chuckled softly and I felt my face to turn red. Now, now, was I falling for her?

“By the way, Asagi.”

“What is it, Ness?”

“Who’s the pretty lady next you?”

Ness was looking at Daniela with his usual comical smile. That was a quick turnaround.

“Ahh, I forgot to introduce you. This is Daniela. She was forcefully involved in last night’s incident. And since then, we’ve found a reason to form a party together.”

“I’m Daniela. Nice to meet you.”

Daniela, Ness, and Gardo offered and shook each other’s hands. I felt my connections as an adventurer were growing.

□ □ □ □

We separated from the two, and I took Daniela over to the Reception counter. Today’s guild worker was the bookworm, Flo.

“It’s been a while.”

“Oh, Mr. Asagi. Nice to see you again. Though, I have seen you within the guild house. So what’s your business here today?”

I guess she had seen me around. Well, things tended to get rowdy, so it was not surprising.

“Yes, I want to form a party with her.”

“I see. Party registration. Please give me your status cards.”

Flo accepted our status cards and placed them onto a tray.

“Thank you. This will be finished in just a minute. Please stay here and wait.”

So saying, she disappeared through the back. We saw her leave and then chatted together for a few minutes until she returned.

“Thank you for your patience. Your party has now been registered. You may

have your cards back.”

I took the cards off the tray and handed Daniela’s card to her.

“Thank you.”

“No, no. It’s just my job.”

Flo brought her small hand over to her mouth and laughed. She used to act quite strangely around me, mostly due to the way the others treated me, but things had become normal now. Thankfully.

We thanked her again and then decided to stop at the bar. The two of us sat together at the bar counter and ordered some flavored water and a side dish. The plate that eventually arrived was a river fish meunière. For a bar full of rougher clients, the food here was strangely refined.

We poked at our food with forks and talked about what we would do next.

“I’m thinking of going after the forest wolves.”

“Mmm, forest wolves. I think the two of us should be able to manage them, even in a pack.”

Daniela said as she pushed her bones to a corner of the plate.

“The forest wolves live in the forest to the north. By the way, did you just arrive in this town recently?”

“Yes. I came from the eastern plains along with a caravan. Those plains were infested with grass wolves.”

“Grass wolves?”

“The wolves in those plains have turned into monsters. Unlike forest wolves, their fur is a yellowish green.”

Interesting. So the wolf that I ate was just a normal wolf.

We discussed such things until we finished our plate.

Well then, it was time to head for the forest.

The two of us accepted our first quest as a party, then made our way out through the western gate and into the forest.

Chapter 18: Redemption

Well then, I was back in the fateful forest. I wasn't such a veteran that I could sense what was around us. Were there forest wolves lurking close by?

"Ahh... I doubt there are any in this area."

"Right. Well, let's check our stats then... Or not, are there rules against checking party members stats?"

"No, there is not. And I'm quite curious about your AGI as well. Let's see it."

With Daniela's permission, we took out our status cards and chanted the same old words together.

"Status open."



Name: Asagi Kamiyashiro

Race: Human

Job: Adventurer (Rank: E)

LV: 21

HP: 236/236

MP: 170/170

STR: 90 VIT: 83

AGI: 276 DEX: 125

INT: 75 LUK: 12

Skills: Jack of all Trades, Master of None

Short sword

One-handed sword

Spear

Magic: Ice, Water, Fire

Quest: Eliminate the Forest Wolves

Party: Daniela Villesilf

Equipment: Head – None

Body – Leather Armor

Hands – Leather Gloves

Legs – None

Feet – Leather Boots

Weapons – Iron sword

– Iron short sword

Accessories – None



Name: Daniela Villesilf

Race: Light Elf

Job: Adventurer (Rank: C)

LV: 67

HP: 689/689

MP: 678/678

STR: 364 VIT: 263

AGI: 268 DEX: 400

INT: 351 LUK: 29

Skills: Fresh Green Eye

Presence Detection

Rapier

Bow

Magic: Wind, Earth, Water

Quest: Eliminate the Forest Wolves

Party: Asagi Kamiyashiro

Equipment: Head – Mask of the Forest People

Body – Light Armor of the Forest People

Arms – Patchwolf Gloves

Legs – Steel Claw Leggings

Feet – Forest Lizard Leather Boots

Weapons – Rapier of the Tree of Life and Death

– Bow of the Tree of Life and Death

Accessories – Cape of the Forest People

– Pendant of the Forest People



Breaking news: Daniela was incredibly strong. But more importantly...

“You’re an elf?”

“Aye, a Light Elf. Hadn’t I told you?”

“Hmm, nope.”

“I see.”

An elf, huh... That was so fantasy-like. Her ears were indeed pointed. But I hadn’t even suspected it. Also, if she’s a light elf, then there must be other elves too.

“If you’re this strong, then you probably wouldn’t have had any trouble back there at the park?”

“Yes, they stood no chance... But, I would prefer to avoid fighting within the town. Also, it is not usual for me to be surrounded like that. My guard was down.”

“I suppose so... Well, I’ll be counting on you, then.”

If she was this strong, then our enemies should be easy to take down. Even so, I was not a fan of power leveling. I should do everything that it was possible

for me to do.

"Hmm, I will do my best when the time calls for it, but I intend to adapt to your level most of the time. Regardless, your AGI is very high... You must be faster than me."

"It's the one thing I'm good at."

"No, you mustn't ridicule speed. Imagine this. You are suffering a one-sided attack at a speed that your eyes cannot catch."

"...That would suck."

"Wouldn't it?"

It reeked of cheating. And there wasn't supposed to be any allowances for the protagonist.

"Your MP is high for someone who has only just learned to use magic... No, perhaps the fact that you've begun to sense the energy has brought the numbers up."

"Maybe. I do feel something now that I never did before."

The magical energy that lay inside of me. A sensation that was all new. It was kind of, soft-like...

But I was of an age to find other people's statuses much more interesting than my own sensations of softness. Especially this 'Fresh Green Eye' skill. It had the look of a unique skill.

"Daniela, isn't that a unique skill as well? I guess it's not that rare to have one then."

"That's not true. It's very rare. We both just happen to have them."

"Ah, I see... My skill, it allows me to visualize the handling of things and how to move."

"Does that mean that you can skillfully use a weapon that you've picked up for the first time?"

"Uh... I guess so."

"That's, quite amazing?"

"The 'Jack of all trades' part is anyway. The problem is 'Master of none.' I still don't quite understand it."

Yes, even now I was stuck on the meaning of this skill. Part of me was worried that if I relied too heavily on this skill for handling weapons, I would one day suffer some terrible retaliation. That is one of the reasons I haven't branched out, even though I probably could use just about any weapon.

The only weapons I've touched were the spear and two swords. And now the sword skills were displaying. And they hadn't displayed the last time I checked... Which meant they must not have been advanced enough to be considered a skill. In any case, I intended to master the one-handed sword and short sword first.

Even now, there were times when I would be fighting a goblin and a new move would appear in my brain. My goal was to stop those from appearing. I would make all of these moves my own without the unique skill. Because I already knew most of them, it shouldn't take me too much time. If I could hurry up and master it, I could move on to the next weapon.

"By the way..."

"Hm?"

"My unique skill, 'Fresh Green Eye' is a skill that is known to sometimes occur in races that live in the forests and plains. It allows you to see the movement and even spirits of the wind."

"There are spirits?"

"Of course? See, there is one nuzzling against your cheek right now."

I feel the wind softly brush against my cheek. So was that the work of a spirit?

"Hehe. Feels good."

"Perhaps you have a nature that the spirits find easy to love."

"I'd love to become friends with the ice and water spirits."

And the fire ones too.

It happened after we had checked each other's stats and had walked for quite a while.

“Asagi, drop down.”

I immediately fall to the forest ground instead of answering with my voice. Daniela had dropped down beside me and was staring intently at the thick clump of trees further ahead.

“The wind is blowing against us, so we are still unnoticed. Look over there, it’s the forest wolves.”

“Where...”

I look through the cracks between the trees. There was a wolf with light green fur. Its nose twitched as it sniffed at the soil. How could I forget that appearance? These forest wolves gave me a good run once. There was a pack of about six of those hated creatures, about fifty meters ahead of us. Were they looking for food? They had their noses in the dirt and were looking at their surroundings.

“What should we do?”

“The wind is very weak. First, I will use my bow from this distance. What do you think, Asagi? I can’t let you use this bow, but you could try shooting them next time?”

Daniela suggested, knowing that my skill would allow it. But I shake my head.

“I want to master using the sword first. If I try my hand at too many weapons at once, I’ll never fully master them. You know, a ‘jack of all trades, master of none.’”

“Hmm, you are probably right. Sorry. It is commendable that you aren’t allowing the skill to control you.”

She smiled as she nocked an arrow and pulled the string tight. Then she looked forward, the smile vanished, and with a sharp eye, she locked onto her target. The status I had just seen said that this bow was called ‘Bow of the Tree of Life and Death.’ It was white and purple and did not make a sound. I didn’t know if it was due to the type of wood or an effect of wind magic. There was no sound of it bending or of the arrow being loosed.

And then the arrow from the soundless bow flew straight into the neck of one

of the wolves that was still sniffing the ground. The force of the arrow blew it right off its legs as it died.

"Good. Let's go."

"Yes!"

I got up and ran through the bushes as I unsheathed my swords. I closed in on them as I ran at full speed, slashing the neck of the closest one. I had to give it to the apprentice, these were good weapons. It made me even more excited to see what Chief's would be like.

I smiled with expectation but stayed alert as I scanned my surroundings. The wolves were finally aware of us. They were howling now and running away. Perhaps they had seen two of their number fall in rapid succession and seen that they were at a disadvantage. But we would not let them run away.

I chased one from behind and slashed at its back. I glance over to Daniela, who had charged forward, pulled out her rapier and pierced it right through a forest wolf. She quickly pulled the blade out and a shower of blood shot out from both holes. She was already running towards me before it fell to the ground.

"Hehe. Is this really the best time to be captivated by me?"

"You look great, Daniela."

"Do-don't say such nonsense!"

She started it but was now embarrassed. It was very cute.

We chased the last two. They were fast. But we were even faster.

I quickly caught up with one and I slashed its throats in one hit so it wouldn't suffer too much. Daniela as well, made one clean thrust into the heart of the other one.

And so our first battle against the forest wolves was a success. As I had now accomplished my personal revenge, I thrust my fists in the air and towards the sky.

Chapter 19: A New Power and a Lively Night

Several hours had passed after the first battle with the forest wolves. We had now gone around and destroyed several packs that were spread throughout the forest, and because the sun was now starting to set, we decided to head back for Fhiraldo. As I moved my tired feet onward, Daniela taught me various things about combat. About using swords, how to swing a short sword, how to throw them. How to fight enemies that moved on four legs, what to do when you are surrounded. And also, how to use magic.

“To start, what should I do if I wanted to use magic in an attack?”

“Ahh...indeed. It would be pointless if it did not hit your opponent.”

“Right. So, it has to shoot outward.”

It wasn’t hard for me to use magic to create ice or water and lower the temperature in a room, because I understood how it worked.

I mainly used the moisture in the atmosphere for my magic, but apparently, most magicians here were converting their magical energy into water molecules to create water or ice. But that would eat through your energy a lot faster. In other words, my method was economical.

However, there was no point in creating lots of ice just because it was economical. It’s not an attack until it hits your opponent in the face.

“Create ice with magic and hurl it into the enemy. That would be the basic ice magic attack.”

“What about freezing them solid?”

“Hehe. I wouldn’t be surprised if you’re able to do it almost immediately, but...”

“The basics first, right?”

“Exactly.”

She nodded. And so I used my magic just as she said.

“Mmmm...”

I gather the moisture from the air to a space in front of my outstretched finger. The small tip sucks in all of the heat. There is a cracking sound as clear ice begins to form. I apply magical energy and maintain its height. There is a thick tree trunk ahead of me that I target...

“Okay...go!”

All the energy collected in my fingertip bursts as it fires. In a blink, the ice bullet had vanished. Then I heard the sound of wood shattering. Apparently, I had hit it. I’ve never actually fired a gun, but I did play quite a few games. It wasn’t hard to just imagine it.

“Asagi... What was that, just now?”

“Huh?”

Daniela asked quietly as she stared at the tree that had been shot at.

“What do you mean? I shot some magical ice.”

“But, that fast? I couldn’t even see it...”

We both walked to the targeted tree. There was a small crater inside of the trunk where the ice bullet had hit. The bark around the area had been blown off, exposing the light brown wood underneath. Judging by the depth, it hadn’t reached the center of the trunk. Of course, the ice itself had shattered and nothing remained.

“The tree is so... I saw you create the ice. But I had no idea that such a small fragment could have this much force...”

“I guess it’s a matter of what you imagine.”

“For better or worse.”

Was there something different about my magic? I hadn’t seen other magic, so I could not really tell. But Daniela seemed to be surprised...

Well, there was no point in staring at the tree in wonderment. We were finished with the wolf hunting; it was time to head back.

“The goods, it’s my turn to carry them.”

“Thank you.”

“Don’t mention it.”

I received the jingling leather bag from her. The bag was full of forest wolf fangs. The quest we had accepted was for the ‘Elimination of the Forest Wolves.’ And you had to bring back two fangs from each forest wolf as evidence that the deed was done. The quest would end once you brought them to the guild. Apparently, these fangs were great materials in making weapons. The market price, amount and quality would all be calculated and you would receive your reward. The more you had, the more you could exchange for money. So it quite worthwhile. And there was also a general reward for completing quests. This job was more lucrative than you would think.

And so I was quite pleased as I carried the hefty bag and trampled over the path of fallen leaves when it happened. Something had moved in the corner of my vision.

“Mm...?”

“What is it?”

“I don’t...”

Was I mistaken? Was it my imagination?

“Just now, I thought I saw a huge wolf. In that direction.”

“Hmm... I don’t see anything. Or feel a presence. Are you sure you saw it?”

“Maybe...yeah. It was pretty big, it must have just been me.”

Perhaps the setting sun had cast an odd shadow through the leaves and it looked like a wolf. We had hunted so many today, after all. I hadn’t seen anything but wolves. There really weren’t any goblins on this side.

“There’s no point in worrying about it. Let’s head back for town before it gets too dark.”

“Yes, the forest at night is especially dangerous.”

Daniela and I rushed passed the trees and hurried down the road back to Fhiraldo.

We rolled back into town just before the sun had completely set.

"Ho, Asagi, Daniela. Had you two come back any later, I would have shut the gates on you."

"That's pretty harsh for a joke, Russell."

"Of course. You'd have to sleep in a tree again."

"Buwahahaha!!"

Russell was on watch today. We laughed at the good old joke and then made our way back to the guild.

Fhiraldo during the night was always a lively place. Delicious smells wafted from the lines of food stalls. The smells of meat cooking, or sweet fruit wines... But we couldn't be distracted by these. We would be allowed to eat as much as we wanted at a discount price back at the Spring Wind inn. Saving was important.

I had to pull Daniela by the hand as she occasionally succumbed to the smells, but we eventually reached the guild house. This place too was lively at night. Their jobs finished for the day, the rowdy gathering would clink their mugs of ale and smack the tables. The sounds of feet tapping on the floors, all of it entered my ears.

"Hooo, Asagi!"

Ness seemed to be in a good mood as his voice boomed.

"Hey, Ness!"

"Ah! Let's drink together!"

"Let me get rid of these first!"

I raise the leather bag in the air and shout as if in competition with the noise of the bar. Ness nods and raises his mug. I'm not making a toast!

I laugh and then head over to the Reward counter with Daniela.

My eyes meet Fiona's, as she sits on the opposite side of the counter. She looks a little surprised, then glances towards Daniela, and her eyebrows narrow.

"That's a funny face you got there. Anyway, can you take care of this?"

“Asagi, who is that?”

“Let’s stay formal. We’re adventurer and guild worker, after all.”

“I’m asking you who she is!”

Well, she seemed a little angry. Would she refuse to accept this if I don’t explain...

“Oh, she is...Daniela. We’ve formed a party.”

“As fellow adventurers? She’s not a girlfriend?”

“Yes.”

“...Daniela. I and Asagi are in a party together.”

“Ohh... you shocked me for a moment... Ah, Miss Daniela, it’s a pleasure to meet you!”

I’m the one that was shocked.

“Look, just take these, please.”

“Of course!”

Fiona took the leather bag full of forest wolf fangs from off of the counter and left. She seemed in a better mood all of a sudden... What was that about? Could it be that she’d fallen for me?

But it was too stupid to consider.

Ness’ annoyingly loud voice had been calling to me for a while now. My eyes meet with Daniela’s and we chuckle. Having little choice, we decided to join Ness at the bar.

Chapter 20: The Day After a Day of Drinking

I wave a hand at Ness and take the seat next to his.

"Ho, Asagi! Let's drink!"

"Looks like you've had quite a lot already..."

"You idiot! This barely even counts!"

I beg to differ. His eyes couldn't even focus on anything. But then again, he was talking just fine irritatingly.

"So, Asagi. How have you been?"

"Recently? Well, it was pretty much the worst until recently."

"Buwahahaha! Sure was!"

I wonder whose fault that was! I don't say it. I have a rule against arguing while drinking.

"Well, I have a good feeling about what's to come..."

I say as I swipe Ness' drink from the side and down the whole thing. It wasn't very chilled, but it tasted great. Daniela was eating the steamed chicken she had ordered with the most satisfied expression. I suppose she really enjoyed her food.

We kept drinking like this for a while, and I periodically stole whatever Ness was eating. He was pretty much done for. He was half asleep now. I rob him of his last drink and plate and move over to Daniela's seat. My mug of ale clinks lightly against her mug of fruit water.

"That was a busy day."

"Aye, Asagi. You did well. Let's keep this up tomorrow as well."

"It's very heartening to have you there with me."

"Hehe. You know, flattery won't get you anything with me?"

She smiled as she brushed her short, platinum blonde hair from her face. She was could be quite handsome...

“Does your hair color derive from your race?”

“Hmm? Oh, well, yes. Generally, that is the case with elves.”

“So there are other colors?”

“There are brunettes and those with silver hair.”

So hair color was not a determining factor for light elves. I ran my fingers through my own hair. As I had worked the night shift for so long and slept through most of the day, I rarely went to the barber. Whenever it reached a certain length, the manager would start touching it from behind, which was my signal to have it cut. The signal was a bit creepy, and I always wished it would stop. Though, I now wondered how he was doing.

“Is your hair derived from your race, Asagi?”

“Well, sort of. I don’t know. But everyone around me had black hair.”

“Hmm... When it comes to black hair, they say that the ogre tribes in the farthest reaches often have black hair. Though the accounts are old and I have never seen them in person.”

She said as she chewed on a mouthful of chicken and steamed vegetables. So there were ogres? Did they wear striped underwear too?

I was imagining what these elusive ogres might look like when I felt someone tap my shoulder. It was Fiona.

“Asagi. Checks finished.”

“You’re not very formal today.”

“Hmph... Why should I be?”

She pouted a little. What was going on? I felt an uncomfortable number of eyes on me. Was this what it was like to be on the receiving end of daggers shot through the eyes? The look coming from right next to me was especially awkward.

“Asagi.”

“Yes.”

“Let’s go.”

"Right..."

Daniela said as she stood up and quickly walked away. I hurriedly chased after her. I did also happen to leave Daniela's bill on Ness' table when doing this.

We received the reward at the counter along with a note.

'Forest wolf fangs.....160/1 gold piece, 60 silver pieces.'

'Quest completion reward.....30 silver pieces.'

1 gold piece had the value of 100 silver pieces, 1 silver piece had the value of 100 copper pieces. It was written on the counter. So according to this, we needed to split the reward into 95 silver pieces. I had left calculations to the cash register, so it was not my forte.

But I was probably right. Up until now, I had not had to think about such things when receiving my reward, but I would have to use my head now in order to split it. It felt like my brain cells were coming out of hibernation. So I had the gold exchanged to 190 silver pieces and split it between the two of us.

"Here, Daniela. You should count yours."

"Mmm... Yes, it's fine."

"I don't want to fight over money."

"Ah, you are right."

She nodded several times. I wondered if something had happened in her past...

After that, we walked through Fhiraldo's streets and returned to the Spring Wind inn together. Now that I think of it, we had avoided the street stalls but ended up dining at the bar anyway. I needed to be more moderate.

The next day, I waited in the dining hall for Daniela, who was as sluggish in the morning as ever, and began to make plans for the day. We could hunt forest wolves again. Sure.

"Oh, are you a customer?"

A voice suddenly interrupts me. I raise my head and see that a woman was standing there with a warm smile.

"Yes. I am."

"Thank heavens. You were in the dining hall but not eating anything. I thought some strange person had gotten in."

It was quite brave of her to say such a thing to a complete stranger. But who was she?

"Oh, I should introduce myself. I'm the innkeeper's daughter, Mizel."

"Oh, Mrs. Maris'."

"Yes, that's right."

Yes, the somewhat slow voice and the soft smile was a perfect match. Just like the morning sunlight, it made you a little sleepy.

"So you haven't eaten yet?"

"No. My partner is staying here with me, and just I'm waiting for her to wake up."

"Is that so. Well then, we'll have the food prepared in advance."

"Uh, thank you."

There was something infectious about the way she talked. As I chuckled to myself, Daniela came through the entrance.

"Good morn..."

"Morning. You okay?"

"Yes..."

She sat down, then collapsed over the table. It would take her a minute to get her engine running again. The first thing to do was to eat.

The basic breakfast at the Spring Wind Inn consisted of toast, fried eggs, and homemade smoked meats. It was a kind of foreign breakfast, and I liked it quite a bit. It was fancy. At least for someone like me who usually slept instead of having breakfast. But recently, I had become quite active, I ate more and slept at night. Was it possible to be too healthy?

Mizel brought over three plates of food. Three?

"Here is your breakfast."

"Thank you."

"Thank you..."

"Hahh..."

She sat down. Eh? What?

“Oh, do you mind if I join you?”

“Well, you already have.”

Daniela was biting into her bread with half-open eyes.

“I’ve just finished organizing all the new provisions. I’m so exhausted and...”

“You worked all night?”

“I did just that. I only arrived just before the gates were closed, and yet mother...oh, the innkeeper, tells me to finish everything tonight...”

We continued eating like this, and Mizel’s complaints continued as well. Apparently, she was in charge of buying new stock. Every month she would go to the city that was reached by way of the opposite carriage tracks from the one I had taken in coming here. I wonder if Mizel’s carriage had helped create those tracks in the road, and the world feels so much smaller.

Eventually, her grievances were interrupted my Maris’ shouting and forceful removal from the room. She waved at us even while she was being dragged away by the collar. We waved back as we got up from the table.

“Well then, we’re a little late, but we should go to the guild house, accept a quest and head for the forest.”

“About that, Asagi. I think we should go and buy a few things together first.”

“Sure, but why?”

Daniela folded her arms and laughed proudly.

“We’ll be camping out. Three days out in the forest!”